DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 428 876 PS 027 456

AUTHOR	Saar, Aino, Ed.; Hakkarainen, Pentti, Ed.
TITLE	Play in Cultural Contexts = Mang Kultuurikontekstis.
INSTITUTION	Tallinn Univ. of Educational Sciences (Estonia).
ISBN	ISBN-9985-58-065-6
ISSN	ISSN-1023-1064
PUB DATE	1998-00-00
NOTE	163p.; Contains 15 articles based on presentations delivered in two conferences: "Play and Culture" (Tallinn, Estonia, April 15-17, 1996) and "Play and Preschool Activities" (Helsinki, Finland, February 7-9, 1997). Article abstracts are in Estonian.
AVAILABLE FROM	Tallinn University of Social and Educational Sciences, 25 Narva Road, EE0001 Tallinn, Estonia.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022)
LANGUAGE	English, Estonian
JOURNAL CIT	Tallinn University of Social and Educational Sciences. Proceedings; A12 Humaniora 1998
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC07 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Cultural Context; *Cultural Influences; Culture; Family Influence; *Foreign Countries; Kindergarten; *Play; Social History; Toys
IDENTIFIERS	Estonia; Finland; Play Learning; Zone of Proximal Development

ABSTRACT

This volume compiles articles based on the presentations delivered at two conferences. The conferences presented a multidisciplinary overview of research on children's play in different cultural contexts. The articles are grouped under six subheadings: play in the family context, play in the zone of proximal development, play in the kindergarten, play and learning, play and toys, and the history and future of play in society. The articles are: (1) "Estonian Parents' Comprehension of Children's Play and Toys" (Aino Saar and Lehte Tuuling); (2) "Relations between Family Members According to the Kvebaek Family Sculpture Technique: A Comparative Study of Families with and without Mentally Retarded Children" (Marika Veisson); (3) "Play and Expansive Learning in Day Care" (Pentii Hakkarainen); (4) "Children's Play and the Creative Process" (E. Peter Johnsen); (5) "Exploring the Zone of Proximal Development" (Bert van Oers); (6) "Joint Action in Young Children's Play in a Day Care Centre" (Maritta Hannikainen); (7) "The Aesthetics of Play: A Didactic Study of Play and Culture in Preschools" (Gunilla Lindqvist); (8) "Play and Learning in Preschool" (Gunni Karrby); (9) "Lithuanian Folk Games--A Reflection of Ethnic Culture" (Aldona Vaicheine); (10) "The Role of Folkloric Musical-Didactic Play in a Child's Development" (Maie Vikat); (11) "Toys and Early Literacy Development" (James F. Christie); (12) "Cross-Cultural Study of Estonian and Finnish Children's Toy Preference" (Soili Keskinen and Anu Leppiman); (13) "Victimization on the Way to Hero-Making in the Play of 7-8-Year-Old American Boys" (Joseph J. Dambrauskas); (14) "Play, Education, and Culture--A Problematic Combination" (Jarmo Kinos); and (15) "The Future of Children's Play in a Changing Society and the Task of Educational Theory" (Hein Retter). Each article contains references. (HTH)

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HUMANIORA

PLAY IN CULTURAL CONTEXTS

EDITED BY
Aino Saar
Pentti Hakkarainen

TALLINN 1998

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MÄNG KULTUURIKONTEKSTIS

TOIMETANUD
Aino Saar
Pentti Hakkarainen

TALLINN 1998

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25 Narva Road
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ESTONIA

OÜ VALI Press
Silla 2
Põltsamaa

© Tallinna Pedagoogikaülikool 1998

ISSN 1023-1064
ISBN 9985-58-065-6

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FOREWORD

This volume includes articles based on the presentations delivered in two conferences held in Tallinn and Helsinki. The conference "Play and Culture" was organized on April 15-17, 1996 by the Department of Preschool Education of the Tallinn Pedagogical University. The second conference "Play and preschool activities" was organized on February 7-9, 1997 by the Center of Developmental Work Research, University of Helsinki as a subconference of the First Nordic-Baltic Conference on Activity Theory. The two conferences presented a multidisciplinary overview of research on children's play in different cultural contexts. The Baltic-Nordic contribution is strengthened by the invited authors from continental Europe and the USA. The cultural approach to research on children's play is in line with the growing interest in cultural psychology today. The articles in this volume are grouped under six subheadings: I Play in the family context, II Play in the zone of proximal development, III Play in the kindergarten, IV Play and learning, V Play and toys, VI The history and future of play in society. There are only few comparative studies in which the same problem has been studied in different cultural contexts. Many articles are problem-oriented and reveal new cultural aspects in children's play. Change and development is a theme common to most contributions in this volume.

We should like to thank the professors of the University of Jyväskylä for cooperation.

We would like to thank the Nordic Council of Ministries' Tallinn Information Office whose support made it possible to publish the present volume.

Aino Saar
Tallinn Pedagogical University

Pentti Hakkarainen
University of Jyväskylä

EESSÕNA

Kogumik sisaldab ettekandeid, mida on esitatud kahel rahvusvahelisel konverentsil Tallinnas ja Helsingis. Konverents "Mäng ja kultuur" toimus 15.-17. aprillil 1996 ja selle organiseeris Tallinna Pedagoogikaülikooli eelkoolipedagoogika õppetool. Teine konverents "Mäng ja eelkooliealiste laste tegevused" toimus 7.-9. veebruaril 1997, mida organiseeris Helsingi Ülikooli tegevusteooria ja arengulise töö uurimiskeskus kui esimese Põhjamaade–Baltikumi tegevusteooria konverentsi alakonverentsi. Kahel konverentsil anti multidistsiplinaarne ülevaade uurimustest, mis käsitlesid laste mängu erinevas kultuurikontekstis. Baltikumi ja Põhjamaade koostööd toetavad käesolevas kogumikus mitmed autorid ka Euroopast ja USAst.

Kultuuriline lähenemine laste mängu uurimisele on kooskõlas tänapäeva üha kasvava huviga kultuuripsühholoogia vastu. Kogumiku artiklid on jaotatud kuude rühma: I. Mäng perekonna kontekstis; II. Mäng lähimas arengutsoonis; III. Mäng lasteaias; IV. Mäng ja õppimine; V. Mäng ja mänguasjad; VI. Mängu ajalugu ja tulevik ühiskonnas.

Siiani on suhteliselt vähe võrdlevaid uurimusi, milles seda probleemi on uuritud erinevates kultuurikontekstides. Artiklites tuuakse esile uusi kultuuriaspekte laste mängus. Muutuste ja arengu teemad on kogumiku peamine sisu.

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I PLAY IN THE FAMILY CONTEXT

Acta Universitatis Scientiarum Socialium et Artis Educandi Tallinnensis. 1998. A12: 11-20

Aino Saar, Lehte Tuuling

ESTONIAN PARENTS' COMPREHENSION OF CHILDREN'S PLAY AND TOYS.

Annotation

The aims of the study were to compare and analyse plays and toys essential for a child's development and to look for ways of finding information about children's play. The research was carried out in two big towns (Tallinn, Tartu) and in the countryside in Estonia with parents with pre-school children serving as informants. The results indicate that parents with pre-school children not only understand the importance and necessity of their children's development but also consider that play and toys have an important role in it.

The findings show that young parents have little actual information about a child's play. As a result, Estonian homes have few toys that would really foster a child's development.

All kinds of conditions must be fulfilled before a child is able to play; he or she needs time, space for playing, knowledge of the surrounding world. At the same time, a playing child is certain to need the attention and interest of grown-ups. Grown-ups who play with children help them to overcome their loneliness and bring themselves closer to the children (Retter 1989; Sutton-Smith 1986; 1994).

We were interested in how Estonian young parents regard the main activity of a child, play, and how much time they find to interact with their children.

The aims of the study were:

- to find out how well parents with pre-school children understand the activities and games essential for the child's development;
- to analyse the toys owned by country and town families and and examine how often they are used in play;
- to compare the attitudes displayed by Estonian country and town parents in supervising their children's play;
- to look for ways of finding information about children's play.

METHOD

The research was carried out in 1995-1996 in two big towns (Tallinn, Tartu) and in the countryside in Estonia. The questionnaire was completed by parents with children

aged between 1 and 7 and attending kindergarten. Of the subjects 267 were living in the towns and 210 in the country. For analysis we divided the results in two age groups, 1-4 and 5-7. In both groups boys and girls were analysed separately. The questionnaire was based on a previous one drawn up by German H. Retter (1973) and consisted of 11 main questions subdivided into more specific queries, where the parents had to choose among a range of predefined answers. There was also space for additional notes and comments.

On the basis of the literature we had read, we presumed that parents are interested in the development of their children and try to find them suitable activities, games and toys . We also presumed that when they choose games and toys for their children, parents take their sex and age into account.

RESULTS

THE ACTIVITIES AND TOYS NECESSARY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CHILD

The first question was meant to find out what sort of activities and toys the parents considered important for the development of their child. They could choose among 13 activities and toys. If the parents judged something else important they had a chance to add it to the list. An analysis of the results revealed that the parents both of boys and girls gave priority to sports and exercise, books, drawing and painting materials and games that teach children to read and write.

The top three activities and toys are the same in both age groups, only their order of importance varies. Both in Tallinn and Tartu and in the countryside, the parents of boys and girls aged 1-4 placed sports and exercise first, then came books followed by reading and writing games. Role and make-believe plays, swimming and games based on technical equipment were considered least important. The opinion of the parents of 5- to 7-year-old children differed from those of the parents of smaller children. The same activities were preferred in Tallinn and in the country. In Tartu the parents of children aged 5-7 preferred building and construction sets followed by books and then by sports and physical exercise. This group placed least importance on role and make-believe play, swimming, singing and playing on a musical instrument.

Table 1.

Toys and activities important for a child's development

TOYS AND ACTIVITIES	BOYS	GIRLS
Sport, exercise, physical activities	84%	90%
Picture books, books to be read aloud to children	81%	90%
Games to teach reading and arithmetics	77%	74%
Handicrafts, modelling	69%	46%
Drawing, painting	67%	79%
Singing, playing on some musical instrument	65%	68%
Construction sets	63%	66%
Playing with natural objects in the yard	53%	59%
Swimming	43%	36%
Playing with dolls, toy animals and other toys	36%	46%
Playing with mechanical toys (cars)	30%	19%
Board games	30%	61%
Toys for acting out different roles and theatre equipment	26%	19%

In addition to the things listed above, the parents living in Tallinn and Tartu mentioned safe housework equipment as things that help to foster a child's development. As regards activities, they mention learning a foreign language, listening to music, joining different societies, musical games.

The country parents added that a very important activity was children doing something together with the parents, not playing but working together . Of all respondents 25 per cent further added that looking after plants and animals is very important. Many parents mentioned the important role of computer and video games for the development of a child.

TOYS OWNED BY ESTONIAN HOMES AND HOW OFTEN THEY ARE USED

The aim of the second and third questions was to find out what sort of toys the children have at home and how often they play with them. The questions were answered by the parents. They could choose from a list of 31 different items. In conclusion we found that when buying toys the parents pay attention to their children's sex: the boys

have more cars and other mechanical toys while the girls have more dolls. Both boys and girls have many books.

Both in the country and in town, homes of the parents with boy children questioned during the study invariably have many toy cars, a few balls and books, a fair number of building sets such as Lego sets, bicycles. The boys invariably have the fewest puppets. Of all the children 79 per cent have no puppets at all. The boys have a few toy animals to be pulled by string, jigsaw puzzles, things for developing their imagination (doctor's costumes etc) and sports equipment.

The girls have a great variety of books, dolls and their equipment, drawing and painting materials. Ninety-five per cent of the girls have many soft toys. They rarely have the kind of things that mostly interest boys, such as mechanical toys, toy rifles, soldiers, Indians. In Tallinn and Tartu the girls have very few puppets. However, things are otherwise among the girls living in the country. Both in the country and in the town it may be concluded that the girls are given more dolls and dolls' equipment while the boys are given more mechanical toys. Although books are very expensive in Estonia, they are highly valued in the families both of the boys and the girls. Toy puppet theatres and creative toys intended to develop the child are valued undeservedly low.

The second part of the question was intended to elicit which toys the children prefer to play with. In the opinion of the parents of 1- to 4-year-old boys living in Tallinn and Tartu, their children prefer books while the second place is occupied by cars and the third by soft toys. The country parents place cars first , followed by books and balls. Boys aged between 5 and 7 living in big towns prefer to play with cars followed by books and building sets such as Lego. Their peers in the country prefer books, followed by cars and then by bicycles and all the equipment needed in outdoor games. In both age groups the boys rarely play with puppets, with toys to be pulled by string, creative toys. According to their parents, in both age groups the girls prefer books. Again according to their parents, girls aged 1-4 prefer having books read aloud to them and looking at picture books. Second after books come dolls together with all their belongings, and painting and drawing materials. Girls aged between 5 and 7 read all sorts of books, which are followed, in order of preference, by dolls and soft animals. The girls rarely play with such toys more often preferred by boys as building sets, railways and car tracks, soldiers, toy rifles and remote-controlled toys.

In conclusion, it can be said that the activities and games of Estonian pre-school children involve picture books, books to be read to them and drawing and painting materials and the Lego type of construction sets. Their parents' choice of toys depends on the sex of the child. The boys play with more masculine toys, the girls with more feminine ones. The boys play with cars, mechanical toys, trains. The girls prefer dolls and housework equipment. We also found that the country children play with outdoor toys (bicycles etc) more than the town children. In terms of age we can see that

between ages 1 and 4 the children play with things specifically made for playing with, while between ages 5 and 7 they prefer things that enable all sorts of action.

PARENTS' EVALUATION OF TOYS AND THEIR FUNCTION

The next three questions helped us to find out the value and meaning that the parents attributed to toys. They were asked to put down toys and games especially liked by their children as well as those that they would advise other parents to use. They were also invited to list any games and playthings that they consider unsuitable for children. An analysis of the answers revealed that toys were evaluated without reference to the children's sex. By contrast, opinions differed greatly between the big towns and the countryside. The country parents had the highest opinion of soft toys. A soft toy calms children, they can take it into bed and tell it all they have on their mind. As soft toys have no sex and no age, in a game they can take on the role of a missing hero . The country parents also value highly things made by the children themselves or together with an adult. The children are said to take good care of such toys. They also need balls and bicycles to encourage them to be more active. The parents think that it is good for the children's imagination to use things that they have at home instead of things specifically made as toys (saucepan as a drum, its lid as a steering wheel etc).

All the parents who answered our questions considered Lego sets and jigsaw puzzles very important for a child's development. There were no differences between the opinions of the parents living in one or the other of the two towns. Both in Tallinn and Tartu, the parents mentioned small model cars, TV and computer games, electronic games. Only one or two parents referred to dolls' houses and puppets. The informants also brought up dolls made as tie-ins of some film that the children have seen: the Biker Mice etc. One of the parents mentioned a calculator, a typing machine, a broken-down telephone and a computer as good things for teaching a child to read and write.

As for things not considered suitable for children, the parents mentioned objects that break easily and are thus dangerous for children, for example metal cars, toys from China, things made of materials that cause allergic reactions in children. The parents both of the boys and the girls think that war toys such as rifles, bows and arrows, soldiers etc are unsuitable for children because they make children aggressive and cruel. The parents also mentioned war films and aggressive cartoons. Many parents singled out computer and video games as being bad for children's health.

To sum up, Estonian parents may be said to value Lego sets and jigsaw puzzles highly as positive influences on their children's development. Both town and country parents have contradictory opinions on the impact of video and computer games on a child's development. The parents are unanimously against war toys, as these make children aggressive. The country parents think that soft toys are very important for children, as are toys that the children have made on their own or together with their mother.

We also tried to find out what sort of toys the parents consider most valuable. We presented them with 12 different definitions of toys and asked them to pick out those that they considered suitable. All parents were of the opinion that a toy is the more valuable the more versatile it is. Secondlly, a toy should also foster a child's intelligence. The parents living in Tallinn and Tartu considered that there should be more play at school but the country parents thought otherwise. Many parents agreed that at a certain age children are interested in war toys, but they think that it is a problem that parents do buy these toys. In conclusion, we found that the parents prefer to buy toys that are versatile and educational and make the children happy. They think that toys typical of boys should also be given to girls and vice versa, but our research suggests that in practice parents act otherwise. The boys' parents try to explain why boys need war toys and the girls' parents why girls need Barbie dolls.

SUPERVISING A CHILD'S PLAY AND THE TIME SPENT WITH CHILDREN

The aim of the next block of questions was to find out how much time the parents spend with their children on weekdays and on weekends and how important they consider such interaction . All the parents that completed the questionnaire thought playing important but at the same time they also considered it very important that the toys are put away afterwards. This was the opinion of 100 per cent of parents with boys and 96 per cent of parents with girls. The parents think that the younger children benefit from parental instruction and also that it is good to put some things away occasionally. Many parents consider that watching too much TV will affect children's playing negatively. Only 12 per cent of parents with boys, 19 per cent of parents with girls aged 1-4 and 8 per cent of parents with girls aged 5-7 think that TV is a good influence on children. Seventy-five per cent of the parents consider that children should play with toys and with things that can replace toys and with housework equipment. While most parents with boys or with girls aged 5-7 thought that boys could play with dolls, 91 per cent of parents with girls aged 1-4 did not consider it normal.

In conclusion we can say that as regards playing with toys, the parents consider it very important that the children put their toys away when they have finished playing, thus emphasizing that when playing their children should observe tidiness and cleanness. The findings show that parents of pre-school children

a) understand that their children find toys interesting and new.

b) see to it that their children's toys are interesting and new.

Children should be allowed to play freely so that they can use their own imagination. Playing with housework equipment is a good way to encourage this. The parents thought that the younger the children are, the more their parents should help them.

Table 2.

Supervising a child's play and the meaning of a game.

SUPERVISING A CHILD'S PLAY	BOYS	GIRLS
It is good for younger children if adults assist them	100%	98%
It is good to let children play with toys and housework equipment	89%	89%
Playing is important but it is equally important to teach children to put their toys away	77%	79%
TV is a positive influence on children	77%	68%
The problem of war toys is not a serious one but has been artificially brought up	72%	80%
Children's play is influenced by the fact that they watch too much TV	66%	58%
Parents should let children play only after they have done their home-work	65%	75%
It is good for the child to occasionally put some toys away for a while	44%	42%
Children must themselves find out how to play with a toy	26%	19%
It is troublesome when boys play with dolls	26%	25%
Parents must let children play freely	25%	17%
Children must use their own imagination rather than follow an example	15%	19%
It is not important to learn to read before school	9%	3%

The parents were also asked how much time they spend with their children on weekdays and at weekends. An analysis of the answers revealed that on weekdays the parents play with 5- to 7-year-olds more than with 1- to 4-year-olds, but at weekends it is the younger children who receive more attention. The mothers have no preferences but the fathers spend more time with the boys than with the girls. On an average, on workdays fathers in Estonian families spend 15-30 minutes playing with their children, at weekends 1-2 hours. As for the mothers, on weekdays they play 15-30 minutes with the smaller children, 30-60 minutes with the bigger ones. At weekends the mothers spend more than 2 hours playing with their children. The mothers play with the children more than the fathers.

WHY AND WHERE DO PARENTS BUY TOYS?

The next block of questions was intended to find out why the parents buy toys and where they find them.

The parents buy toys mostly as birthday or Christmas presents. The following reasons were also given: when we want to surprise the child, when we feel that the child needs a new toy. The parents usually do not buy a toy just to satisfy their child's wish to have a plaything already owned by all the other children. Only rarely are toys given as a reward for some work. More than 80 per cent of all the parents questioned by us have financial problems with buying their children a good and valuable toy.

Toys are usually bought from special toy shops. The parents would like more information from salespeople about what toys are appropriate for children of different ages. Of parents with boys 90 per cent and of parents with girls 91 per cent considered that the salespeople are not competent enough. The parents living in the smaller towns disagree with the view that the children have too many toys nowadays. By contrast, about half the parents living in Tallinn and Tartu think that it is a problem that the children have too many toys.

WHERE TO FIND INFORMATION ABOUT TOYS AND GAMES

The last question dealt with problems encountered with finding information about play and toys. The parents receive most of the information when they visit toy shops. In the country the second best source of information were kindergarten teachers followed by books, magazines and acquaintances. In big towns the second place is occupied by acquaintances after which come newspapers and television. The parents get least information from the kindergarten teachers, even though they are the most competent persons to treat these problems.

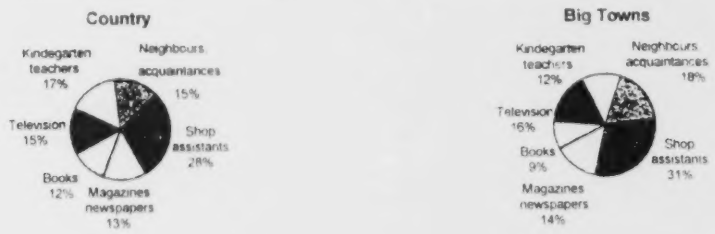

Chart 1. Sources of information about play and toys

DISCUSSION

The results of the research revealed that parents of pre-school children understand the importance and necessity of their children's development and also consider the role of play and toys important.

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The findings show further that the young parents have little actual knowledge about children's play. As a result, Estonian homes have few toys that would really foster a child's development. As regards both the boys and the girls, the leading role is taken by books - picture books, books to be read aloud and books used to teach the children to read and write. In the parents' opinion, least important as influences on their children's development are toy theatres and other role-playing equipment. There is very little puppet theatre equipment. Boys and girls usually favour different toys (the boys preferring cars and the girls dolls); only construction sets (Lego) and jigsaw puzzles interest both.

The parents think that the younger the children are the more they should be helped and shepherded to play, while the older children must be allowed to play freely so that they can act out their fantasies and use their imagination and creative resources.

Another finding was that the country parents prefer real work to play. In their opinion playing is just an amusing pastime and entertainment. At the same time the mothers and fathers living in the country consider that the best toys are those that they have themselves made for their children from natural materials(wood, wool etc).

The results also indicate that whether they live in the country or in town, the mothers and fathers think that play must have an educational objective and that it must contribute to their children's studies at school.

The parents find information about games and toys mostly in toy shops. There is not enough information in magazines. The parents rarely ask pre-school teachers about the subject even though they are the most competent persons in these problems.

The above research results suggest that we should look for ways in which teachers could be more helpful in providing parents with information about activities and games that foster their children's development.

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EESTI LASTEVANEMATE ARUSAAM LASTE MÄNGUST JA MÄNGUASJADEST

Resümee

Laps vajab mänguks mitmesuguseid tingimusi: aega, mänguruumi, teadmisi ümbritsevast maailmast. Mängija vajab kindlasti ka täiskasvanu tähelepanu ja huvi.

Meid huvitas, kuidas Eesti noored lapsevanemad suhtuvad lapse põhitegevusse – mängu – ja kui palju nad leiavad aega lastega tegelemiseks. Uurimuse eesmärkideks oli:

- välja selgitada eelkoolieaiste laste vanemate arusaamine lapse arengu jaoks olulistest tegevustest ja mängudest;
- analüüsida linna- ja maaperedes olevaid mänguasju ja nendega mängimise sagedust;
- võrrelda Eesti linna ja maa lastevanemate suhtumist laste mängu juhendamisse;
- välja selgitada laste kasvatamise kohta informatsiooni saamise võimalusi Eestis.

Viisime läbi uurimuse, mis hõlmas kogu Eestit. Selleks kasutasime ankeetküsitlust.

Uurimuse tulemustest selgus, et eelkoolieaiste laste vanemad mõistavad oma laste arendamise tähtsust ja vajalikkust ning tähtsustavad mängu ja mänguasju lapse arengus. Läbiviidud uurimuse andmed osutasid, et noortel vanematel on vähe informatsiooni lapse mängu kohta. Seepärast on kodudes vähe last tõeliselt arendavaid mänguasju.

Ankeedi vastused näitasid, et kõige rohkem on eelkoolieaiste laste kodudes raamatuid, joonistusvahendeid ja Lego-tüüpi ehitusmaterjali. Poisid kasutavad põhiliselt autosid ja tüdrukud nukke ning nukkude juurde kuuluvat.

Uurimuse tulemused näitasid, et maa lapsevanemad eelistavad laste jaoks tõelist tööd mängule. Mäng on nende arvates lihtsalt lõbus ajaviide ja meelelahutus. Maal elavad emad-isad leiavad, et parim mänguasi on see, mis on oma kätega tehtud ja looduslikust materjalist (nt puidust, lõngast jne). Tulemused viitavad, et nii linna emad-isad kui ka maavanemad leiavad, et mängul peab olema kindlasti õpetuslik eesmärk ja see peab aitama kaasa õppimisele koolis.

Saadud uurimistulemused panevad mõtlema, kuidas õpetajad saaksid paremini anda lastevanematele informatsiooni last arendavatest tegevustest ja mängust.

Acta Universitatis Scientiarum Socialium et Artis Educandi Tallinnensis. 1998. A12: 21-31

Marika Veisson

RELATIONS BETWEEN FAMILY MEMBERS ACCORDING TO THE KVEBAEK FAMILY SCULPTURE TECHNIQUE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF FAMILIES WITH AND WITHOUT MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN

Annotation

Kvebaek Family Sculpture Technique (KFST) was used in this study for comparing perceived family structure by children who have mentally retarded and normal siblings. A total of 90 children, seven to ten years of age took part in the study. 47 of them had a mentally retarded sibling and 43 did not. No significant differences were observed between the groups, but there were significant differences between boys and girls as to perceiving family structure.

Both historically and as regards method, family sculpture is related to psychodrama (Moreno 1946) and to experimental exercises widely used in human relations training. Such techniques include psychodrama reenacting actual events to help one or more participants, from whose life history the plot is abstracted, to achieve catharsis and social relearning; family photo reconnaissance using family photographs, slides and movies to help the family reexperience past events and, by doing so, appreciate current feelings; and family sculpting, the therapeutic art form in which each family member arranges images of the other members in a tableau which physically symbolizes their emotional relationship with one another (Ruben 1978). Family sculpture aims at distancing the client from his or her emotional experience, providing, through this disengagement, new insight into the complex relational determinants of past and present situations. Evidence from various fields of investigation strongly suggests that people use compressed spatial metaphors to sort out, map and store their understanding of the complex interpersonal systems in which they are embedded. Sculpture methods (e.g. space sculpture, family sculpture, relationship sculpture, spatialization) is a body of techniques which enable people to tap into their metaphorical maps, to make these internal realities external, visible, and accessible to study and change. Sculpture techniques are not too difficult to learn. In a very real sense, they are based on a spatiotemporal, physical "vocabulary". The user must, above all, become familiar with and conversant in this spatial "language", that is, he or she should be able to read and speak freely in spatial metaphors and analogies. According to Rechlin, Arnold and Joraschky (1993), sculpture methods are a good way to obtain information

about real and ideal family structure. A correct application of all such methods involves three stages: 1) establishing the mapping between physical and metaphorical space, 2) constructing the sculpture, and 3) processing the sculpture, or debriefing. Sculptures may be divided into three groups: 1) simple spatializations, 2) boundary sculptures, and 3) family (or other system) sculptures (Constantine 1978).

Family members have been asked to represent family characteristics by means of a variety of techniques: placing twodimensional paper or felt figures, or stick figures or circles, or threedimensional figures (Cromwell, Fournier, Kvebaek 1980, Gehring, Marti 1993) on a sheet of felt or paper or on a board. One method that is useful in marital and family diagnosis and therapy is the Kvebaek Family Sculpture Technique (KFST) (Kvebaek 1992). The KFST, the sociogram and the lifespace diagram are different ways of structurally representing a systems perspective on a person's human relationships (Bothelho, Shields, Novak 1992).

The Kvebaek Family Sculpture Technique is used to map family members' conceptions of their mutual relations and of their interpersonal world. Constantine (1978) argues that "people sort out, map, and store understanding of the complex interpersonal systems in which they are embedded in the form of compressed spatial metaphors."

In KFST, one or more family members use stylised wooden figurines to represent the parents and children in the family and the ways in which they relate to each other (Kvebaek 1992). The results have been quantified by measuring Pythagorean distances between figures placed on a chequered board of 10 by 10 cm squares (Cromwell et al., 1980). The separate computation of various distance scores on an ad hoc basis is timeconsuming and complex, especially with large samples. The requirement that only one figure can be placed in each square severely restricts the expression of nuances in interpersonal distances. The physical distance between figures is generally interpreted as an index of perceived psychological distance (closeness, belongingness, cohesion, and so on) and yields meaningful and generally consistent findings (Gehring et al., 1993). Madanes et al. (1980) have reported an evaluation of family structure in terms of hierarchies and crossgenerational coalitions which found that in terms of closeness and hierarchy, families of heroin addicts show weaker generational boundaries than normal families. In the KFST, family characteristics have also been examined in terms of dimensions such as cohesion and adaptability. According to Wood (1985), cohesion and hierarchy are the two central dimensions of family structures. Russell (1980) found good convergent and construct validity for cohesion as well as fairly stable dyadic distance testretest scores over a 3month period. Russell's data support the Family Sculpture Test as a useful clinical and research tool for the measurement of family cohesion but not of adaptability. Eckblad and Vandvik (1992) report on the use of the KFST in a longitudinal psychosomatic study of children with recent onset of juvenile rheumatic disease and of their parents.

Andersson (1997) proved that children with and without mentally retarded siblings perceive their families and relationships in a similar way and that there are no significant differences between the two groups. Eckblad & Vandvik (1992) and Vandvik & Eckblad (1993) report on the use of the KFST in a longitudinal psychosomatic study of children with recent onset of juvenile rheumatic disease and of their parents. Eckblad and Vandvik (1992; 1993) defined four types of family configuration: close (all family members are very close to each other), hierarchic (medium close with clear separation between parent and child systems), unspecified (medium close with no clear separation of subsystems) and skewed (relatively large and variable interpersonal distances). The KFSt revealed differences between the families of parents who wished or did not wish for a change of family configuration. The findings lend support to the clinical validity of the KFST and corroborate its usefulness as a tool in family research.

METHOD

A total of 90 children, aged between seven and ten, took part in this study. Of the 90 children 47 had a mentally retarded sibling while 43 children without a disabled sibling in the family formed a control group.

In both groups family size ranged from four to five members, each family thus having 2-3 children. Most families had two parents, in some cases stepparents. The mean age of child respondents in the families with a disabled child was 8.68 years and of those in the control group 8.30 years. There was no statistical difference in age between the two groups.

The children with a disabled sister or brother were found through special schools and day care centres in Tallinn, Tartu and Pärnu and in the countryside. The children in the control group were chosen from the schools attended by the siblings of the disabled children.

Most of the tests were conducted in 1995 and 1996. They were carried out in the same schools.

All children had to take the tests on their own, thus eliminating the influence of parents, siblings or other persons when tested.

In this study we have used the Kvebaek Family Sculpture Technique because it enables us to catch the attention of younger children and reflects family relations.

The Kveback Family Sculpture Technique (KFST) is employed for assessment and research purposes; it can also be applied clinically in therapy. The KFST involves the use of a chessboard consisting of squares measuring 10 x 10 cm and of wooden figurines representing the different generations of the family. Each sibling places the figurines on a separate board to show how he or she perceives the real structure of the family. In a second phase each sibling arranges the figurines to depict his or her ideal image of family structure. The KFST uses the difference between family members'

perception of their real and ideal family structure to work towards changing the way in which they organize their family.

The directions given to the respondents were as follows: "These figures represent you, your mother and father and your siblings. Arrange the figures on this board according to how close you feel to one another how close you feel to your mother and father and your siblings. If you think that two people feel very close, you might place the two figures next to each other. You can put one figure in each square." (Russell 1980)

All distances between the members of each configuration, defined as the distance between the circumference of the figurines, were then calculated using a computer program. The output from the program consists of a written description of each family (number of children, age, sex, ranked distance from mother and father and from the geometrical centre of the family, the number of children interposed between the parents), a data file containing 50 variables and an order file for the statistical package SPSS/PC+.

The following distance variables are included in the present study: family mean distances (the mean of all interpersonal distances within each family), family standard deviation (the standard deviation of all interpersonal distances in each family), motherfather distance, and family mean parentschildren distance (the mean of all distances between parents and children in each family).

T test was used for comparing independent groups.

The computations made with this instrument have been carried out as follows:

A. The real and ideal distances

1. The distance between Ego and X, where Ego represents the tested child and X another member of the family, is computed according to the formula $a^2+b^2=c^2$ (the Pythagorean theorem), each square of the board constituting one unit or point.

The value c represents the emotional distance between Ego and X. The lower the figure, the closer the family member is to Ego.

2. Distance values between Ego and each member of the family are summarised and mean scores are computed for the two groups. These mean scores are compared between the disabled group and the control group with respect to both real and ideal representations of family structure.

To guard against divergence with respect to the children's distribution of the figurines (dolls) over the board in the two groups, the mean distance within the families have been computed excluding the disabled child and the child matched with the disabled one. The summarised mean values for these members of the disabled group and of the control group respectively were then compared.

B. Distances can also be computed not only between Ego and any other person in the family, but also between dyads of other family members; for instance, it is possible

to measure the distance between mother and disabled child (or father and disabled child) as these family relations are seen by Ego.

C. Distances can also be computed and compared by sex (Andersson 1997).

RESULTS

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE DISABLED GROUP AND THE CONTROL GROUP WITH RESPECT TO DISTANCES BETWEEN FAMILY MEMBERS

There was no statistical difference between the two groups, which means that the distribution of the family members over the chessboard can be regarded as equal (Mean values: disabled group 3.47, control group 3.45, p= .94). Comparing the real distance value between Ego and the other family members across the the disabled group and the control group (Table 2) reveals only one statistically significant difference, found between Ego and his or her older Child 1) siblings. Further, in the control group there is more variance

a) in control group mothers' and fathers' perceptions of the present (real) state of their family relations.

b) in the real distance perceived by Ego to exist between himself or herself and his or her parents

Numerically, in both groups most children wish that they had a closer relationship with their parents; however, siblings of mentally retarded children would, on the contrary, like a more distant relationship with their mother (Table 1).

Table 1.

Distances between the disabled/control child, father and mother as perceived by Ego using Kvebaek's Family Sculpture Technique

	DISABLED GROUP N=47			CONTROL GROUP N=43		
	Real	Ideal	Difference	Real	Ideal	Difference
Disabled/control child	3.43	3.29	0.14	3.26	3.14	.12
Father	3.72	3.47	0.25	3.70	3.38	.32
Mother	3.07	3.24	-0.17	3.66	3.57	.09

Table 2.

Distances between Ego and other family members. Mean values.
Real relations according to Ego

	DISABLED GROUP			CONTROL GROUP				
Family member	Count	Mean	SD	Count	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Father	41	3.72	2.16	42	3.70	2.17	.042	ns
Mother	47	3.07	1.73	43	3.66	2.21	-1.42	ns
Child 1	45	1.15	0.46	37	2.79	1.10	-8.54	<.001
Child 2	30	0.99	0.48	23	0.96	0.53	.212	ns
HC control child	47	3.43	2.24	43	3.26	2.01	.45	ns

Table 3.

Distances between Ego and the other family members. Mean values.
Ideal (or wished-for) relations according to Ego.

	DISABLED GROUP			CONTROL GROUP				
Family member	Count	Mean	SD	Count	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Father	442	3.47	2.41	42	3.38	2.32	.174	ns
Mother	47	3.24	2.52	43	3.57	2.29	-.654	ns
Child 1	44	3.03	1.97	37	3.15	2.28	-.248	ns
Child 2	31	3.44	2.17	24	2.63	2.17	1.357	ns
HC control child	47	3.29	2.09	43	3.09	2.11	0.45	ns

DISTANCES BETWEEN THE DISABLED CHILD AND THE OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS ACCORDING TO EGO

The test also gives an opportunity to measure the distance between the mother, the father, sibling 1 and sibling 2 on the one hand and the disabled child on the other, and likewise, in the control group, the distance between parents and siblings on the one hand and the control child on the other (Tables 4 and 5).

Table 4.

Distances between father/mother/siblings and the disabled/control child. Mean values. Real relations according to Ego.

	DISABLED GROUP			CONTROL GROUP				
Family member	Count	Mean	SD	Count	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Father/HC(c)	42	3.70	2.24	41	3.69	2.17	.02	ns
Mother/HC(c)	47	3.53	1.97	43	3.66	2.21	-.029	ns
S1/HC(c)	35	3.79	1.83	35	3.50	1.24	.775	ns
S2/HC(c)	34	3.64	2.11	34	3.53	1.51	.437	ns

Table 5.

Distances between father/mother/siblings and the disabled/control child. Mean values. Ideal (or wished-for) relations according to Ego.

	DISABLED GROUP			CONTROL GROUP				
Family member	Count	Mean	SD	Count	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Father/HC(c)	42	3.22	1.83	42	3.26	1.83	-.100	ns
Mother/HC(c)	47	3.52	2.11	43	3.28	1.83	.545	ns
S1/HC(c)	36	3.19	1.81	36	3.20	1.89	-.02	ns
S2/HC(c)	36	3.31	2.20	36	3.41	1.92	-.21	ns

A comparison of the disabled and the control group reveals no statistically significant difference between the children's view of family members' real relationships. The distance between the disabled child and his or her mother is longer than that between the control child and his or her mother, but again the difference is non-significant.

DISTANCES BETWEEN FAMILY MEMBERS BY SEX ACCORDING TO EGO

While we discovered no significant differences between families with and without disabled children, we did find significant differences in family relations by sex. Boys' relations with their fathers and mothers were conspicuously more variable than those of girls. Similarly, there was greater variation in family mean distances as perceived by boys than as perceived by girls (Table 6)

Table 6.

Distances between father/mother/siblings by sex. Mean values.
Real relations according to Ego.

	BOYS			GIRLS				
Family member	Count	Mean	SD	Count	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Father/Ego	36	4.28	2.58	46	3.28	1.68	2.00	.05
Mother/Ego	38	4.21	2.40	47	2.72	1.33	3.45	.001
HC/Ego	18	3.63	2.14	24	3.75	2.36	0.343	ns
Family mean/ego	38	3.82	1.54	47	3.20	1.21	2.147	.05

DISCUSSION

There was no statistical difference between the two groups of subjects, which means that when the disabled and the control child are excluded, the distribution of family members over the chessboard, can be regarded as equal (mean values: disabled group 3.47, control group 3.45, p=.94). This also corresponds to the results of Andersson (1997),who found no significant differences between his handicapped and control groups. The mean values discovered in his Swedish study are lower than those detected in Estonia (disabled group 2.68, control group 2.81, p=0,78). Lobato et al. (1987) similarly found few differences between siblings of handicapped and non-handicapped children in a study comparing their interaction with their mothers, brothers and sisters.

We detected some differences in distances by sex. Boys are significantly more distant from their fathers and mothers, and family mean distances perceived by boys are significantly greater than those perceived by girls.

The data presented in this study illuminate the usefulness of the Family Sculpture Technique as a powerful tool for the systematic assessment and treatment of families. As pointed out by Solem and Novik (1995), this instrument reflects the feelings between the members of a family.

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PERESUHETE MÕÕTMINE VAIMSETE PUUETEGA LASTE JA KONTROLLGRUPI PEREDES, KASUTADES KVEBAEKI PERESKULPTUURI TEHNIKAT

Resümee

Eestis on suhteliselt vähe läbi viidud empiirilisi uurimusi puudelaste ja nende perede sotsiaalsetest suhetest. Käesolev artikkel püüab anda lühiülevaate allakirjutanu poolt viimase nelja aasta jooksul tehtud tööst.

Uurimuste eesmärk oli välja selgitada, kas vaimupuuetega lastega ja kontrollgrupi perede sotsiaalsetes suhetes on olulisi erinevusi.

1995.–1996. aastal testiti 7-10-aastasi õpilasi, kasutades Norra psühholoogi Kvebaeki pere skulptuuri tehnikat (Kvebaek Family Sculpture Technique, 1992). Kvebaeki metoodika on üsna vana, kuid alles 90. aastatel saanud maailmas tuntuks ja seda kasutatakse nii empiirilistes uurimustes kui ka teraapias. Test kujutab endast mängu nukkudega, mis sümboliseerivad perekonnaliikmeid ja nende peresuhteid. Nukud

asetatakse kabelauale mõõduga 1 x 1 meeter, millel on 10 ruutu horisontaalselt ja sama palju vertikaalselt. Nukkudevahelised kaugused mõõdetakse Pythagorase teoreemi abil. Testiti 47 puudelapse õde-venda ja 43 eakaaslast, kes moodustasid kontroll-grupi. Igat last testiti 2 korda: esimesel korral reaalseid ja teisel korral ideaalseid ehk soovitavaid suhteid perekonnas. Kahe grupi tulemusi võrreldi ning töödeldi SPSS programmi abil

Selgitasime Kvebaeki pereskulptuuri tehnika abil välja 47 vaimupuudega lapse õe-venna ja 43 kontrollgruppi kuuluva lapse reaalse ja ideaalse ettekujutuse peresuhetest. Selgus, et olulised erinevused kahe grupi liikmete vahelistes distantsides nii reaalses kui ka ideaalses plaanis puuduvad. Seega võib väita, et nii vaimupuudega laste õed-vennad kui ka nende klassikaaslsed, kelle peres puudelapsi ei ole, tajuvad peresuhteid üsna sarnaselt. Kahe grupi tulemustes on vaid üks oluline erinevus. Puudelaste õdedel-vendadel on võrreldes teiste klassikaaslastega lähedasemad suhted endast vanemate õdede ja vendadega. Huvitav on fakt, et soolised erinevused on märgatavad. Poistel on nii emade kui isadega, samuti keskmiselt kogu perega kaugemad suhted kui tüdrukutel. Erandiks on vaid distants vaimupuudega õe ja vennaga. Siin poiste ja tüdrukute vahel oluline erinevus puudub. Absoluutarvude järgi võib koguni väita, et poisid on väga lähedased oma vaimupuudega õe või vennaga. Tüdrukud ei ole nii lähedased.

II PLAY IN THE ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT

Acta Universitatis Scientiarum Socialium et Artis Educandi Tallinnensis. 1998. A12: 35-50

Pentti Hakkarainen

PLAY AND EXPANSIVE LEARNING IN DAY CARE

Annotation

Play is analyzed in this article from the point of view learning. The adults working in the day care institutions often understand learning as acquisition of knowledge and facts. Learning in play is based more on the relation between what is pretended and what is real. The two cases analyzed show the tension between adults' task orientation and children's tendency to transform adult initiated play and learning situations to self-organized role play.

INTERRELATION BETWEEN PLAY AND LEARNING

Play and learning as analytical categories are often separated from each other. A certain situation is either play or learning. Separation of these categories is based on the contextual definition of each activity. Learning takes place in a situation where someone tries to teach a person, and play does not require similar contextual constraits. In fact the relation between play and learning is much more complex and varied. In this article play and learning are analyzed in institutional settings of Finnish day care centers.

Four aspects of the relation between play and learning are essential: 1) How children learn to play and what are the central elements in this learning process, 2) Play as a learning mechanism and a method of knowledge acquisition, 3) Developmental perspective of play and learning, and 4) Adult guidance of play and learning. All these aspects are present simultaneously in real life situations, and it may be artificial to talk about play or learning separately. In other words there is only one process i.e. play, learning and development at the same time.

An essential viewpoint in the analysis of the relation between play and learning is how cultural level is introduced and included into an analytic schema. There is a tradition according to which play, learning and development are treated first of all as individual phenomena. The relation between the cultural and individual levels was not included in the analysis. The Vygotskian concept of the zone of proximal development and the analysis of cultural level as the prerequisite of individual changes radically altered the situation. A common denominator in the analysis of the four aspects named above is expansive change.

In order to understand play as a cultural phenomenon and its relation to learning it is necessary to characterize the essential features of play. A widely shared view is that play is not goal-oriented activity and no material outcomes are produced in play. Play is something that happens here and now, and its processual features are essential. Gadamer (1975: 93) described this aspect of play: "The movement which is play has no goal which brings it to an end; rather it renews itself in constant repetititon....The actual subject of play is obviously not the subjectivity of an individual who among other activities also plays, but instead the play itself".

Communicative or metacommunicative characteristics of play make the essential difference in Bateson's theory of play. According to him metacommunication is an essential element without which it would be impossible to carry out any play. Children have to be able to construct a play frame and communicate a shared agreement on their actions before they can engage in play. This metacommunicative message Bateson called "this is play", because "these actions in which we now engage do not denote what those actions for which they stand would denote" (Bateson 1972: 180).

The essential features of play (pretend play) are desrcribed by the use of performance or drama metaphors from adult life. There are several possibilities from which to choose when describing pretend play as performance and drama: 1) script metaphor (e.g. Bretherton 1984), 2) conversation analysis (Peters, Boggs 1986) or 3) event schemas (Mandler 1979). The problem of static structural description of the play drama is critizised by Sawyer (1997) who introduces improvisational metaphor as a solution for describing temporal structure of pretend play in unscripted interaction situations.

Different interpretations of play focus on different aspects of learning, and they require different properties of the learning processes. On the other hand the concept of learning may vary depending on what changes are underlined as indicators of learning. E.g. Bateson (1972) introduced his four level division of learning on the basis of the nature of the changes taking place in the learning process.

"Zero learning is characterized by specificity of response, which right or wrong- is not subjected to correction.

Learning I is change in the specificity of response by correction of errors of choice within a set of alternatives.

Learning II is change in the process of Learning I, e.g., a corrective change in the set of alternatives from which a choice is made, or it is a change in how the sequence of experience is punctuated.

Learning III is change in the process of Learning II, e.g., a corrective change in the system of sets of alternatives from which a choice is made.

Learning IV would be change in Learning III, but probably would not occur in any adult living organism on this earth. Evolutionary process has, however, created

organisms whose ontogeny brings them to Level III. The combination of phylogenesis with ontogenesis, in fact, achieves Level IV" (Bateson 1972: 293).

Deutero-learning or learning to learn is acquired according to Bateson in early infancy. He writes: "It follows that Learning II acquired in infancy is likely to persist through life." (Bateson 1972: 301). The transition from Learning II to Learning III is explained by inner contradictions of Learning II. This inner contradiction is called double bind. In a double bind situation a person receives two messages that deny each other. As an example Bateson repeats an famous zen-koan: "If you say this stick is real, I will strike you with it. If you say this stick is not real, I will strike you with it. If you don't say anything, I will strike you with it" (Bateson 1972: 208).

Using Bateson's levels of learning as starting point Engestrm (1987) introduced his concept of expansive learning. Expansive learning is connected with changes which can be characterized as historically new phenomena. His central question is what kind of learning is needed when something new is created? Expansive learning focuses on externalization rather than internalization. On a more concrete level the analysis of expansive learning traces and creates situations which lead to reorganization of human activity. Does the concept of expansive learning have any relevance in the analysis of children's play? Usually children's pretend and role play is understood as internalization of cultural models (Hakkarainen 1990).

From the point of view of learning, pretend play seems to be a strange learning situation. The paradoxical aspect of learning in play is formulated by Donaldson: "...why should children begin the apparently pointless activity of treating things as what they are not." (Donaldson 1992, 69). She refers to three facts in children's pretending: 1) physically present objects are made to stand for- or serve as- others, 2) attribution to objects of properties which they do not in fact posess, and 3) the use in play of totally imaginary things when in reality there is only empty space.

Learning is not simply acquisition of the facts of surrounding environment. Donaldson defines the function of pretend play by describing a new evolving mode of the mind "construct mode" which has to be supplied by a deliberate constructive act of imagination. The core of the construct mode is described as follows: "Instead of here/now or there/then mind will next begin to concern itself with a locus conceived as somewhere/sometime or anywhere/anytime. Thus in the third mode we are no longer restricted to a consideration of episodes in our own experience - or even those we heard about from others. We start to be actively and consciously concerned about the general nature of things." (Donaldson 1992: 80).

The same aspect of learning before the school age is presented by Vygotsky in his analysis of the relation between children's aesthetic creativity and play. Learning takes place in a paradoxical form of "impossibilities". Vygotsky cites Cukovsky: "These impossibilities would be dangerous for the children if they hide genuine and real mutual relations between ideas and objects. But they are not hiding anything but

on the contrary reveal, colour and underline. They strengthen (and do not weaken) the perception of reality in children" (Vygotsky 1987: 249).

Play and pretend play cannot be defined as poor learning because of a distorted interpretation of reality, but as a key factor in the development of the learner. Generalization, which is based on the relation between "distorted and real" and ability to learn how to learn, are the key concepts in analyzing learning in play according to Vygotsky, Bateson and Donaldson. How does the every day life in day care centers develop these key aspects of learning in play? Two episodes of day care life in which play and learning take place will be described in the following sections.

LEARNING FOR PLAY

"Research groups" is a new fad which has replaced didactic play and teaching sessions used in the 1970s in the Finnish day care centers. A research group is a small group of children (usually 4-6) which selects a theme, collects information from books and other sources, discusses on the basis of individual experiences, makes visits to places connected with the theme, makes exhibits, pictures and models or perhaps a portfolio of written material and visual documents. The themes can be real challenges for the day care workers, because children usually choose specific themes which adults do not master.

The following episodes are selected from a theme carried out in a month's time in 1996. Four boys (age 4-5 years) took part in it and they picked up the theme "The Knights". The theme proceeded in the following periods: 1) information acquisition from books and other sources, 2) planning of castles and a medieval environment, 3) preparing actors and 4) thematic role play. The thematic role play was activated by the preceding thematic work and figurines given to the children. There are interesting differences in the children's ideas on the theme and the adults' ideas on what should have been learned.

The script of the first session can be described in the following way:

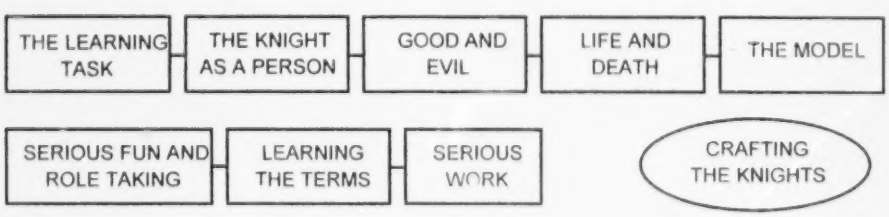

Figure 1. The script of the theme "The knights"

The learning task

In the beginning the teacher defined the task for the group and reminded them during the process about what the task is. The teacher(Aili) collected a heap of books dealing with knights. Four boys (Jukka, Pekka, Olli, and Matti) gathered in a quiet corner and studied illustration of the books. The task definition is underlined in the following episode:

Jukka: Look what I have here.

Aili: What do you have there?

Jukka: I have this.

Aili: My Kai (her own son) has small model knight riding on horses and footsoldiers. He promised that he could come and show them to you and *if we are going to build a castle you might borrow those models*. Would that be nice? *If we build a castle using that carton, we should make a plan first.*

Matti: Look what I have here. I have these knights.

Olli: Me, too.

Aili: You are right, in the book.

Jukka: Look! It should be like this. Like this one with a door. Hey, would it be nice, if we had someone who wears this?

Olli: Have these (armour)

Matti: And these (armour)

Aili: *We thought that we'll make a helmet and a shield*

Jukka: I wanted to have a knight figure.

Olli: I would like to have this (shows an armour in the book)

Aili: *Hei guys, you are not listening to what I have to say!*

Matti: I found a castle.

Aili: *Okay, you might look for pictures of castles.*

Matti: We could build a castle like this.

Aili: You could use it as a model.

The teacher has collected picture books related to the theme, and the boys have started going through the pictures in the books. No one can read, but they are interested in the pictures. The teacher has an idea that the children should find pictures of castles which could be used as stimulus material for making a plan of the castle on paper. Later on the models will be built by using cartons and role play carried out. The roles are strengthened by making a helmet and a shield for every participant.

The knight as a person

The teacher has a practical goal during the first session: a model for the castle is selected from the books and a blueprint for a knight's castle is made on paper. But this plan does not work. The children are bringing up other themes that are interesting from the point of view of the learning process, and the teacher has to steer the discussion to the direction she wants. In the following excerpt the teacher tries to focus the discussion and the children's attention on the question what kind of people the knights were and and what they looked like:

Aili: Lets think about the knights.

Pekka: I have a castle here, too'.

Aili: Okay, what kind of people were the knights?

Jukka: Such as they were in those old days.

Aili: As they were in old days, but what did they do?

Pekka: And here is a castle, too.

Jukka: Such ruins!

Jukka: They carried out such things, having helmets on the head.

Aili: Yes, yes, but what were they like?

Jukka: People

Olli: Soldiers.

Aili: Yes, soldiers.

Jukka: Soldiers, and there are people inside (looking at the armour)

Aili: Yes, there is a man inside.

Olli: Yes, and he is inside the armour.

Aili: There was a picture in Matti's book.

Matti: There was a castle.

Aili: But there was a knight in the armour, too. Here is a knight.

Jukka: Look at this picture!

Olli: There was a knight in the helmet. Too.

Aili: Yes they wore helmets.

Jukka: Look here!

Aili: Here a knight is dressed. A knight had a page boy helping him in dressing. He is not able to put on an iron armour all by himself.

Jukka: It has to be opened before a knight can step in it.

Aili: Step in? Here you can see how it is put on. What was put on first. They started with a gambeson and after that the chainmail and jambs then the backplate and the

breastplate, shoulder-guards, rerebraces and gauntlets. Where are the spurs? What is a spur? (Jukka shows). Now the knight is fully dressed.

Olli: Hei Aili!

Aili: It took a long time to dress a knight

Olli: Look at this. This is a good sword and this and this.

Matti: I have this.

Jukka: I have this.

Good and evil

In the following section the teacher turns the children's attention towards the moral side of knighthood. In this part there is a discussion in which a child starts to ask for more infromation. The teacher also requires a child to follow what is told in a school-like manner:

Aili: Do you know against whom the knights fought?

Matti. I have this.

Jukka: Against warriors.

Aili: Yes, and for whom did they fight?

Olli: Of course for the king.

Aili: For the king, yes, that's right.

Jukka: For the king.

Aili: And for the church and they were defending the poor. They fought against the evil. They were good, the knights.

Olli: They were good, the knights, they defended the poor.

Matti: We'll buy, guess what ?(to Jukka)

Olli: Did they attack them?

Aili: Yes, they attacked if the villains attacked.

Olli: Against the poor?

Aili: No, against the villains who came to rob the villages. Did you hear Matti?

Matti: Yes

Aili: What did I tell just a moment ago?

Matti: I don't know

Aili: They defended the poor if the villains attacked the villages. If the king departed with his court the knights followed.

Olli: From where did they get these dogs? (Shows a picture)

Aili: Dogs have always been there.

Jukka: Take my mask off, I can't see anything.

Life and death

The following section is the most philosophical one. The children start discussing actively death and dying. They relate their earlier knowledge with the theme. Pekka is clearly referring to the Estonia catastrophe, which happened a few months earlier. In this section the children's general knowledge on life and death is revealed.

Aili: What else did you find in the books?

Jukka: In my book?

Olli: Look, I have a lot of deaths.

Matti: Look, what I have

Pekka: Who is this?

Olli: A dead man.

Aili: In those days there were no doctors or good medicine and there were deseases that killed a lot people.

Jukka: These knights, too?

Aili: They also died.

Jukka: Did they become alive again?

Aili: What? After they died first? Is it possible to become alive again?

Jukka: Noooo

Olli: No

Pekka: Here is a castle, too.

Olli: You cannot recover from any sickness if you die first.

Jukka: If you are shot you die and you cannot return any more.

Olli: You only lie in your grave.

Aili: That's right.

Jukka: You have to have a little, every one has to have a gun otherwise some one suddenly shoots and all are gonna die.

Aili: Did the knights have guns?

Boys: No

Aili: How did they fight then?

Jukka: With swords.

Olli: With swords, knives and axes.

Jukka: With swords, and with knives, and with axes.

Matti: With guns.

Aili: Yes, with guns, too. The castles had guns.

Jukka: It was shot, pum and somebody died.

Pekka: If a ship goes down you may die, too.

Jukka: If you are on the deck.

Pekka: You may die of cold, too

Aili: It's possible, yes.

Jukka: You may die of hunger, many die of hunger. Food must be given, otherwise you cannot live more.

Olli: There are other possibilities of dying. That's true.

Pekka: What picture have we here?

Jukka: Old people die and never, ever come back.

Aili: That's true, you cannot live forever.

Olli: No.

The model

The essence of a castle was found by having a discussion on curtain walls, gates and towers.

Aili: Pekka found a picture. This is the castle and its curtain walls are far away. There are houses, too

Olli: But what are these then?

Aili: Fields which were cultivated.

Olli: Did they jump over the walls from here?

Aili: Look, what is here?

Jukka: A gate.

Olli: A gate.

Aili: There were gates, these people were no prisoners. These were curtain walls against their enemies.

Jukka: But they can jump over the walls.

Olli: Or climb up.

Jukka: Or climb a tree and then jump.

Olli: But you die of it

Aili: Of what?

Olli: If they jump and fall to the ground.

Jukka: The enemies can jump over this place, over the fence.

Olli: Otherwise, if someone opens the gate, they are in in a moment.

Jukka: And then they can, then they can go hush, hush.

Serious fun and role taking

There is an interesting contrast between the teacher's goal to keep the children on the task and the children's tendencies to allow the details to catch their attention or to take a role offered by the pictures. The next excerpt reveals how the teacher interrupts the role taking and forces the children back to the task:

Aili: Here you can see crusading knights.

Olli: They are great knights!

Pekka: When I grow up I'll be an adventurer, and I'll travel with my ship.

Olli: So am I, too. When I grow up I'll start attacking.

Aili: Where do you direct your attacks? Are you going to be Phileas Fogg?

Olli: I'll wear an armour

Aili: Look, here we have good pictures of swords and shields.

Olli: When I grow up I'll get dressed in an armour

Aili: Look here, what is this? Who knows?

Jukka: When I grow up I'll get dressed in an armour

Matti: When I am grown-up I'll get dressed in an armour

Learning the terms

The children's mastery of concepts is still vague, and they don't master reading skills. There are moments during which the teacher's skills are used directly by the children. In the following excerpt the teacher corrects the terms used by a boy and after that a boy demands that the teacher should read the text.

Aili: The book is finished. Let's take the papers!

Olli: Here the knights are swording with each other.

Aili: Not swording, but fencing.

Olli: Yes fighting, going out for fight.

Aili: Here I have a picture of a castle at last.

Matti: That's right.

Olli: Look, I have a wound on my finger.

Aili: This knight has a wound on his finger! I remember that here were different kinds of (castles).

Olli: What are these? What is written in this part?

Aili: This is about the development of armours. They were different at different times. These are not iron armours. They are made of what?

Matti: I don't know.

Pekka: Of cloth.

Olli: Of cloth.

Serious work

Little by little the children are ready for drawing models on paper. But the teacher's guidance and control is an essential part of the work.

Aili: Sit down properly!

Jukka: Why?

Aili: Because it is time to plan the castle.

Jukka: I just thought that it should be like this. Give me a pencil!

Aili: I'll give you a pencil. Pekka gives you a pencil. Lets make only one picture first.

Matti: I can draw a better one!

Aili: Ok. Matti you can take a look and here we have one more.

Jukka: What about me? What can I draw?

Aili: Do the same.

The children started to draw castles individually. They used pictures in the books as their models, but everyone had his own solution. The teacher asks critical questions on each individual drawing and writes explanations on each picture.

Pekka: Is this a good castle?

Aili: Yes. Now I'll ask Pekka and write down what can be seen in this picture.

Pekka: Mine!

Aili: Is this like a curtain? Is this depicted from the side?

Pekka: No, no way.

Aili: How then? Is this the whole castle?

Pekka: Yes.

Aili: If you like, you may add some details in case they are necessary.

Crafting the knights

The theme of medieval knights pops up two weeks later when the same group of boys is crafting. They start spontaneously preparing knights using aluminum foil, carton tubes from toilet paper rolls, feathers and glue.

Olli: Look, Aili what a knight! Those are evil and these have war and fight. Only good people are allowed to enter this castle.

Matti: How can I fix this to that (aluminium foil)?

Aili: Use the glue!

Jukka: I take this home with me.

Aili: It is not allowed.

Jukka: I made a fish.

Pekka: Knights did not need any fish when they left for a crusade

Jukka: This as a ferry.

Olli: This knight has a horse (an empty joghurt cup)

Matti: I need the scissors.

Olli: This will be the boss of the knights. This is the most beautiful of all.

Jukka: When they are crusading they ride on their horses, -they are riding and not travelling on ships

Pekka: I need the foil. Give me the glue!

The script of the theme reveals an interesting interplay between the adult's and the children's perspectives. The teacher has a school-like task in her mind: the children should use picture books as stimulus material for drawing a picture of a medieval castle. Later on the children would continue with the theme by crafting a 3D model of the castle depicted on paper using carton and other material needed in a role play. The children are interested in big questions of life like death and life, good and evil. They try to take a role and relate facts through the roles. Tentatively the contrast between these perspectives could be described as an adult's attempt to make a route from facts to fantasy and the children's route from fantasy to facts.

REORGANIZING THE PLAY SETTING

One of the qualitative characteristics of learning is the nature of changes taking place in the learning process, which was the main criterion of the levels of learning described above (Bateson 1972). Redefining a problem situation or setting is a more demanding learning task than problem solving without analyzing or changing the setting. This kind of situation took place in a day care center where we analyzed day care work (Hakkarainen 1990). Each Friday the whole day was dedicated to play in a group of 12 children aged 3-6 years. But the adults have certain learning goals in mind while organizing the play setting for children.

The teacher told in the interview: "....there are children who cannot play properly at all or they have only one theme they master. They become boisterous....we try to organize an interesting play for them." The interviewer observed that the teacher told the children not to start "doctor" -play and she asks why it was done. The teacher answered: "Yes, they should play different themes and every theme should be an interesting one. I think it is not right to send a child to a play group that does not stimulate. They are not involved.....we try to stimulate social contacts between children, they should play with different children."

In order to attain these goals three play centers were organized by the adults and each center was supplied with supporting material (blankets and chairs for the hut play, kitchen utensils for the home play and miniature animals and cars for the sand play).

Children were divided into the centers by the adults and the children's proposals for play themes ("doctors", water play) were denied. All children wanted to start sand play, but only four of them were accepted, and the others were told that they have the possibility to change the center after a while.

But the idea of organizing play shifts and circulating children from one center to another was destroyed, and a new setting for the whole group was defined by two boys.

The boys built a hut using blankets and other materials reserved for the play. Later they were quietly playing inside with a girl when an adult from the neighbour group arrives and sees an extra bench belonging to her group side by side with another bench, which is part of the construction. She carries out this extra bench. After a while the children observe that a bench is missing.

Kai: Everything is destroyed.

Jari: Always somebody comes.

Kai: I'll never start again.

The boys start to leaf through a book. The other one suddenly stops.

Kai: Pang, Pang. Hei! Let's start a band?

Jari: Yees, we did it once. A band , yee.

Kai: Who is going to sing?

Jari: No, no. I am not with it. You proposed it. You said it. The proposer always starts.

Kai: Hey, who will play the drums? Who takes the drums? Jari, Jari takes the drums.

Jari arranges chairs, a table and a box in front of him.

Jari: The guys of our band are doves,yee,yee.

Kai: Jari plays the drums. Let's take the chairs. Hey, the money!

Jari: Other drums, too. Hey, over there, look now!

Kai: Yess. Let's not start a band.

Jari: Look, over there is the auditorium.

Kai: Right.

Jari starts to gather the play money for the ticket office and calls for the other children.

Jari: Who is coming to play in our band?

Teacher K: What happened with the hut?

Jari: It was destroyed when a bench was carried out.

Teacher K: Oi, a bench was carried out and the hut was destroyed.

Jari: One more bill.

Teacher K: Take a chair. You could use a chair.....

Jari: We are gathering a band. We need drumsticks

Teacher K: Yes, we'll go over in a moment to sandplay.

Jari: Go now and give the money to the children. Go and ask for the money!

Teacher K: We'll pay a visit here. Just practise and we'll come and listen.

Kai: Hey, what can we use as a guitar? Let's take that bedtime toy.

Teacher K: (To the other children) Let's go and listen to the band when the band is.....(to the boys preparing instruments) Call us when you are ready!

Kai: Yes, and the money has to be distributed and the tickets made.

Teacher K: What?

Kai: The tickets

Teacher K: Aha! I'll come with the group.

Kai: Ok. It's center folks.

TeacherK: We'll arrive soon, but first we'll drop in over there.

In contrast to play centers planned by adults the boys building the stage and auditorium for the play "music band" define the space and the whole play setting on their own. The space they are using expands from one corner to the whole room. The door is the check-point at which tickets are sold and checked. At a later point lights were put out and spotlights (two table lamps) were lit in order to mark the stage and divide the room between the audience and the band. The boundaries and time schedules planned for play by the adults were crossed at the physical as well as at the social level.

DEVELOPMENTAL PERSPECTIVE OF PLAY AND LEARNING

There are several interpretations for the essential changes as to what is play and what is development. From the individual perspective play is only a context in which more essential changes take place. According to piagetian theory the development of a child's semiotic capacities is core of development, and play is only a context which offers opportunities for semiotic development. The development of semiotic capacities is accompanied by the transition from solitary to social play. The psychological obstacle for participation in social play is according to Piaget the child's egocentrism. In many cases the context is understood as a set of external conditions of development. Different levels of embedded systems describe the developmental contexts (e.g. Bronfenbrenner 1977). The phenomenon in the focus of analysis is placed in the middle of concentric circles. Cole (1996) calls a set of concentric circles as the description of context of the unit of analysis in the middle "something that surrounds". He sees as the positive aspect of this method of describing context, that it allows the idea of mutual constitution of the levels and a simple unilinear temporal ordering of phenomena to be avoided.

Cole (1996) derives a more powerful metaphor for context from the Latin root of the term meaning "to weave together". The difference between these two interpretations

of context is described by Cole in the following way: "When context is thought of in this way, it cannot be reduced to that which surrounds. It is, rather, a qualitative relation between a minimum of two analytical entities (threads), which are two moments in a single process. The boundaries between "task and its context" are not clear-cut and static but ambiguous and dynamic. As a general rule, that which is taken as object and that which is taken as that-which-surrounds-the-object are constituted by the very act of naming them." (Cole 1996: 135).

What is the relevance of this metaphor in analyzing the relation between play and learning? How are play and learning woven together? In both cases presented above the adults have a learning orientation which may not take into account children's perspective. From the child's point of view pretend/make-believe is psychological prerequisite of participation and learning rather than task orientation and adult forced peer choice for preorganized play themes. Adults seem to have a hypothesis that learning takes place in a play context if new child-child contacts and new facts are introduced. Children have a more holistic understanding in both cases. Facts are woven together with moral values and role taking in the first case, and participation is expanded to the whole group instead of fractions in the second case.

In both cases the adults are not able to perceive the contradiction between form and contents or real and impossible, which Vygotsky underlined. These contradictions as the focus of learning in play would open a new possibility for weaving together play and learning.

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MÄNG JA LOOV ÕPPIMINE LASTEAIAS

Resümee

Mängu iseloomustatakse tegevusliigina, mis ei anna mingeid konkreetseid tulemusi. Traditsioonilisele definitsioonile alluva õppimisega võrreldes on kujutlusmängule iseloomulikud mitmed paradoksaalsed omadused. Õppimise seisukohalt vaadatuna näib kujutlusmäng kummalise õppimissituatsioonina. Mängu teel õppimise paradoksaalse aspekti on Donaldson sõnastanud järgmiselt: " Miks peaksid lapsed alustama ilmselgelt mõttetut tegevust, võttes asju sellisena, nagu nad tegelikult ei ole." (Donaldson 1992: 69). Ta viitab kolmele aspektile laste kujutlusvõimes: 1) füüsiliselt kohalolevad objektid muutuvad tinglikult teisteks või asendavad neid; 2) objektidele omistatakse omadusi, mida neil tegelikult pole; 3) väljamõeldud *asjade* kasutamine mängus, kus tegelikkuses on tegemist tühja ruumiga.

Kuidas leiab aset õppimine tegevuses, mis teravalt vastandab tegeliku ja väljamõeldu, ja kuidas lasteaia õpetajad lapsi õpetada püüdes seda spetsiifilist moodust arvestavad? Analüüsitakse kahte näidet Soome lasteaia praktikast: 1) teema "Keskaegsed rüütlid" ja 2) mäng "Iseorganiseeritud orkester". Esimese näite puhul loob õpetaja koolilaadse ülesandele orienteerituse, mille eesmärgiks on mitmekülgsem rollimäng, kuid ei kasuta faktide õpetamist kujuteldavate kontrastide abil. Teine näide kirjeldab juhtu, kus lapsed lõhuvad täiskasvanute poolt eelnevalt organiseeritud struktuuri ja loovad kogu grupi jaoks uue mängu konteksti ja teema. Me võime seda nimetada ekspansiivseks õppimiseks mängu teel.

Acta Universitatis Scientiarum Socialiumet Artis Educandi Tallnnensis. 1998. A12: 51-59

E. P. Johnsen

CHILDREN'S PLAY AND THE CREATIVE PROCESS

Annotation

Problems in the assessment of creativity are discussed in this study, and empirical studies are criticized in terms of the soundness of their designs. The current trend for educators to endorse play training as means of enhancing creative potential or behavior is critically evaluated. Theoretical connections between the pretense aspects of play and the process of creative thought are suggested.

In looking to the future, there is an undeniable logic to arguments that the problems faced by most societies will be solved only if the creative potential of each generation can be fostered from the earliest age. Play scholars in recent times have argued for a close association between play and creative activities (Lieberman 1977), although the definitions of both constructs vary from author to author.

Naturalistic studies of young children's play suggest that social pretense sequences give evidence of a certain spontaneity as children invent interactions and build reciprocally on what continues to emerge in the text of their episodes, being constructed as Fein (1986) notes, from the bottom up, with no overall organization. Can one deny that this is in some significant way evidence of creativity?

While critical of what he terms the Romantic view of play in which authors of this century have ignored the dark side of play expressed in pranks and perverse cruelty, sex and slang, gambling and graffiti, Sutton-Smith has noted, somewhat perversely, potential positive outcomes of play.

"In a number of studies, various researchers have shown that children who are more playful are more creative, that when experimental groups are given play opportunity or play training, they end up being able to give more novel or creative responses than control groups . . . In those situations where innovative behavior is required, play potentiates novel responses." (Sutton-Smith 1976: 3).

Other well known authors have made similar suggestions. Bruner noted that, "The opportunity to play in early childhood may mean the ability to lead a creative and mentally healthy attitude in later years" (Bruner 1975: 82).

In 1983, a coauthor and I completed a review of the effects of play on children's social and intellectual functions (Christie, Johnsen 1983), and our conclusions about the impact of play training on creativity were as follows:

"The research reviewed . . . indicates that play facilitates associative fluency, the ability to generate many original uses for objects. It appears that the symbolic transformations that occur in make-believe play are the key link between play and this type of creative thinking. In these transformations, children distort reality to fit their needs and whims, resulting in the generation of novel associations and combinations of ideas. Dansky and Silverman contend that this free assimilation creates a generalized set for ideational fluency, which might transfer to new situations requiring creative responses." (Christie, Johnsen 1983: 101)

While the possibility of enhancing divergent problem-solving, the term used for any measure of associativity or fluency that was open ended, was acknowledged, the article did conclude with cautions about future researchers taking pains to distinguish play from confounding variables like exploration and social or verbal interaction between children and adults.

Hindsight brings wisdom perhaps, but certainly it allows consideration of more data. The purpose of this paper is to examine the research evidence linking play to the creative process. It is limited to representative studies published in English during approximately the past fifteen years, which have included measures of creativity and play. Studies that have focussed primarily on clinical behaviors or used subjects identified as emotionally dysfunctional have not been included, as well as those which have concerned themselves primarily with increasing play itself.

POLICY STATEMENTS AND EDUCATIONAL RECOMMENDATION

Authors writing for consumers in the fields of Education and childrearing began in the early portion of the past decade to write articles endorsing play as a vehicle for producing the creative child. Some of these studies cite earlier experimental work like the studies referred to above, but the bulk of this writing contains applications of theoretical statements about play to the creative process and citations to correlational or predictive studies. Examples of such approaches include Somers and Yawkey (1984) on imaginary play companions' contributions to creative abilities of young children and Trostle and Yawkey (1983) on facilitating creative thinking through object play. While these writings reference little or no research showing causal relationships between play and creative outcomes, they promote play as a social and educational policy within a framework of unexamined scholarly writings, and later become themselves citations used by other scholars. For example, Singer and Singer in a chapter on imaginary playmates noted that, "As studies have accumulated in the 1970's and 1980's, the evidence for the prevalence, 'normality' and, indeed constructive, adaptive role of imaginary friends has increased. . . and more recent reviews by

Jana Somers and Thomas Yawkey, among others, point even more strongly to the creative and useful role of such playmates." (Singer, Singer 1990: 98).

Such misinterpretation of professional writing in no way denies the role of imaginary personifications in allowing children to escape boredom, to compensate for subjective inadequacies, or to cope with the cruelty of a contemporary society as clinical literature reports (Singer, Singer 1990). However, the chaining of citations to articles which have an insubstantial basis in data that could support causal links between play and creative outcomes becomes, in effect, a self fulfilling prophecy, and an appealing gloss that supports the promotion of global forms of play as educational panacea.

DATA ON PLAY AND CREATIVE PROCESSES

A very limited number of studies linking play as an influence on creative functions appeared in journals during the period between 1983 and the first half of the 1990's. Six studies will be reviewed in some detail which met the criteria for inclusion listed above.

Truhon (1983) conducted a cluster and path analysis study on 30 kindergarten subjects. The variables measured included observational assessment of solitary play, the Alternative Uses Tests and Torrance Figural Test of fluency, the Playfulness Scale (a test which includes joy, humor, and spontaneity as individual differences in children's play), and a measure of intelligence. This research was motivated by Lieberman's view (1977) that only play which includes elements of playfulness may be related to creativity. The path model suggested no relationships between play and the fluency assessments. The study is constrained in several ways including using only solitary play episodes. Lieberman's (1977) correlations between playful play and divergent measures have been shown to be attenuated by intercorrelations with intelligence test scores which account for a large portion of the shared variance.

Udwin (1983) conducted a small experimental study of 17 children institutionalized because of family neglect or abuse, using imaginative play training for a randomly determined treatment subgroup. This training elicited fantasy play using stories, role playing, and exercises, while the control group engaged in puzzle use and constructive play. Twenty minutes of free play, rated on Singer's (1973) scale of imaginativeness (degree to which a subject introduces elements of pretend and transcends the immediacy of time and place), Unusual Uses Tests of divergent thinking, and story responses to Children's Apperception Test (CAT) cards, were among the instruments assessed. The results indicated that the fantasy play intervention increased play ranked at higher levels of imaginativeness but primarily for the younger children, who also exhibited higher levels of non-verbal IQ. The experimental training also increased the divergent thinking scores and the quality of CAT stories, which were rated blind by a second reader. Udwin cautioned the reader about the restrictive nature of the sample and that the segment of the sample most responsive to training had differences in

age, IQ, and predispositions toward imaginativeness in play before treatment. It was also noted that tutoring across the groups was not balanced, and that adult tuition is a confounding condition. The study is cautiously designed but the limits of the sample and the interactions between sample characteristics prohibit generalization to general non-institutionalized samples, and once more, confounding social relationships compete for explanations of the outcomes.

In a study designed to validate a model of creativity, Moran, Sawyers, Fu, and Milgram (1983) intercorrelated measures of ideational fluency (Alternate Uses test and Pattern Meanings) with observed play behaviors of preschool children independently scored using the Singer (1973) classification of imaginative play. Correlations found (r=.59, p_ .05) were strong enough to be statistically significant. As a correlational design of course, nothing can be said about the direction of influence between the variables. Some similar findings have emerged in the work of Shmukler (1983-84) who has argued not only for a multidimensional concpetion of what she titles, "imaginative predisposition", but found also that there was some predicittive validitiy to measures of imaginative play in the preschool years to various measures of creativity at age ten. There was substantial mortality among her original samples, however, and in a later covariance training study with children from proverty backgrounds, Shmukler and Naveh (1984-85) found that any form of play training, structured or not, significantly increased divergent thinking skills compared to controls over a one month period; however, these increases in creativity assessments occurred regardless of the children's prior assessments on imaginative predisposition.

Li (1985) completed a quasi-experimental study of the effects of training in pretend play on associative fluency in 45 preschool children about equally divided in age across three, four, and five years. Students were matched by age, sex, and on play behaviors, both from direct observation and taped segments which were then subjected to rankings based on Singer's (1973) imaginativeness scale; control and experimental groups were formed, seemingly for each age group, but the description of the method is vague. Training included thematic fantasy role playing after manner of Saltz and Johnson (1974) for the treatment groups and mastery activities for the control groups. Measures of observed play, scaled for imaginativeness,and the Alternative Uses test (Wallach, Kogan 1965) seem to have been administered both before and after the treatments which took place during the eight week 20 minute sessions described (but only six of the sessions seemed to contain pretend activities). The analysis of the data seemed to be a 3 (ages) X 2 (testing times) analysis of variance with age as the individual difference variable and observed imaginative play frequencies and Alternate Uses test scores as the outcome variables. No explanation for the absence of covariance or the use of gain scores, nor the potential ineffectiveness of matching to equate original imaginative play rankings was given. The author confounds pretest and posttest treatments and any other unmeasured differences between the matched group in the same analysis, but reports a significant increase in both pretend play and associative fluency as a result of the training condition; however,

only the results for one age group are reported but the age is unspecified. While the author concluded that training in pretense is called for to enhance creative, divergent abilities, the weaknesses of the sampling, matching and the statistical analysis, as well as other design problems including the absence of clear descriptions of the outcomes precludes any reliable conclusions.

At about the same time as the Li publication, a series of articles debating the limitations of the research designs examining the effects of play appeared in the literature (Simon, Smith 1985; Dansky 1985; Simon, Smith 1986). Questions were raised about experimenter bias (adult tuition), scoring bias, and the brief treatments of laboratory experiments confounding the outcomes. While the arguments focussed on design concerns, a subsequent study by Smith and Whitney (1987), not only introduced controls for the potential bias in prior research, but also measured performance on associative fluency (Unusual Uses tests) as the dependent variable, one of the common measures of creativity used in these studies. Four treatment conditions were constructed including, free-play, experimentally encouraged pretense using materials, imitation, and a control. The results were no significant differences on Unusual Uses due to either familiar materials or novel materials. A subset of play activities were examined to validate the occurrence of play in the treatment groups. Clearly sources of bias were eliminated and children did actually play in treatment groups, although the frequency of play varied across the two experimental groups with encouraged pretense producing significantly more pretend play than the other treatments. Smith and Whitney (1987) interpreted the findings as supportive of the view that experimenter bias has possibly accounted for much of the variance in training studies, and the influence of play on divergent processes measured through fluency assesssments cannot yet be supported.

The final study is an experiment by Berretta and Privette (1990) designed to assess the impact of flexible play on fluency (production of many ideas), flexibility (diversity of ideas), and originality (uncommon or unusual responses) as measured by the Torrance Tests, a paper and pencil scale (Torrance 1966). Ninety-two subjects, median age 9 years, 7 months, were randomly assigned to one of three treatment and control groups. One forty minute treatment in the flexible play group consisted of either using art, drama, or playground activities stressing doing things in a novel way by the experimenters. Controls engaged in art but were told to complete activities in a predetermined manner, or read scripts, or played structured games. The Torrance Tests were administered immediately after these experiences concluded. Two - way analysis of variance revealed no effects for the different content of activities but the flexible treatment groups did significantly better on only the originality portion of the Torrance Tests. While the authors acknowledge the past problems with experimenter bias, they give no explicit evidence of controlling for the amount and type of interactions between adults and children across the various groups. Explicit training to be novel in the play activities seems to have effected direct transfer on the originality scales. No measures of play were taken to validate the treatment. Bias or direct

training seems to be able to account for the outcomes as well as any effect ascribed to play itself.

CONCLUSIONS AND COMMENTARY

The results of this brief review of studies on play and creative outcomes suggest that scant evidence is available to account for the current approach to using play in home and school as the precipitating experience for creative children. The research methodology is suspect in most of the studies in terms of experimenter bias, even when the authors acknowledge the problem in their publications. At least one must argue that alternative hypotheses compete for any potential effect that play, whether spontaneous or "trained", has on creative outcomes.

What accounts for the continuing assumption that, as Sutton-Smith questioned in a recent article on adolescence and creativity, ". . . the variability that characterizes play and the variability that characterizes creativity might well be related."? (Sutton-Smith 1988: 309). To this writer, part of the problem lies with the lack of clarity of the construct of creativity. Authors conducting research on play and creativity seem to have adopted the view that creative behavior can be captured by responses on any creativity test. Tardif and Sternberg (1988) in a recent book on the psychology of creativity summarized various authors' positions on creative products by noting that while many authors emphasize test performance, that technological invention and artifacts, novel styles, designs and paradigms, expressions of emotions in painting, sculpture, and the performing arts of dance and theater, and in media like photography and film are all creative products. While novelty or fluency may be an aspect of all of these products, they are not the only aspect, and the potential for such creativty may be unlikely to be captured in any predictive sense by a score on a single test. In addition, Runco' s (1992) review of divergent thinking tests, while concluding they are ueful as estimates of children's creative potential, noted that their validity is selective for some types of performance like writing, but not for others (e.g., art, performing arts, etc.). Further, he suggested that the traditional scoring of such tests in fluency, flexibility, and originality, may be inadequate. Okuda, Runco, and Berger (1991) also found that measures of real-world problem solving were more predictive of creative accomplishments by grade school children, than were scores on divergent thinking tests.

In addition, Tardif and Sternberg (1988) have also addressed the issue raised in the studies above that concentrate either on imaginativeness as an individual difference variable that will predict the creative person or on training for all which assumes that everyone has the capacity for creative development. Tardif and Sternberg summarize the various points of view by concluding:

". . . there is no one personality or motivational characteristic that is useful for attaching the label 'creative' to a particular person. Rather, creative personalities are composed of a constellation of many characteristics, some of which may be present

in one creative individual, but not in another, and thus mentioned by some authors, but not others." (Tardif, Sternberg 1988: 435).

If the view of play has been as romantic as Sutton-Smith (1988) has suggested, then our theories on creativity have been too simple. Fein (1986) used the concepts of referential freedom and denotative license to describe children's divergent relationship with their environments and their actual experiences. She commented that decontextualization and uncoupling pretense from reality allows children to possess a double-layered system of representation, one for practical, declarative knowledge and another for affective knowledge. This pretend perspective then may allow children to explore emotional meaning free from reality constraints, but eventually with development and the actual experience of playing with emotions, also to learn to control them.

Does such freedom to explore and invent, to deal with emotions that are both benign and conflicting, sound in some way analogous to creative processes? Tardif and Sternberg (1988) claimed that theorists suggest that creative thinking involves transformations of the external world and internal representations by forming analogies to bridge conceptual gaps, nonverbal modes of thinking, and tension of one kind or another. While the domain of creative thought has been considered more cognitive than emotional, there seems to be an analogy of sorts between the fields of creativity and pretense.

In summary, what seems clear to me is that the empirical evidence has to date produced no sound substantive basis for social policy formation about play as a training field for creative processes. Theoretically, it falls to highly creative thinkers to relate in some way the metacommunication about emotion that pretend play may represent, with the metacommunication about ideas that creative thinking may represent.

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LASTE MÄNG JA KREATIIVSUS

Resümee

Artiklis vaadeldakse lühidalt teadustööd, mille eesmärgiks on lähendada laste mängu ja loovat protsessi, ja käsitletakse uusimaid loovusse puutuvaid uurimusi. Fantaasiat ja kontekstivälisust käsitletakse mänguprotsesside teaduslikest definitsioonidest lähtudes. Peatutakse loovuse hindamise probleemidel ja kritiseeritakse empiirilisi uuringuid, lähtudes nende ülesehituse arukusest.

Uurimuse tulemusena järeldatakse, et kui mängu loogika väidab, et mängul või mängu protsessi erinevatel aspektidel on seos loovusega, siis praegune haridus- ja meditsiinitöötajate suund õpetust mängu abil toetada, et loovat potentsiaali või käitumist suurendada, võib osutuda enneaegseks. Pakutakse välja teoreetilisi seoseid mängule omaste teesklemise aspektide ja loova mõtte protsesside vahel.

Acta Universitatis Scientiarum Socialium et Artis Educandi Tallinnensis. 1998. A12: 60-72

Bert van Oers

EXPLORING THE ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT

Annotation

Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development is elaborated by conceiving the "zone" as a co-constructed sociocultural activity within which the development of the participants is based on a coordinated exploration of possible actions within that activity. Two illustrative cases are analyzed: an istructional dialogue between a teacher and a 13-year-old student on physical phenomena and construction play with a 5-year-old boy.

ABOUT THE EDUCATIONAL MEANING OF THE ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT

One of the most frequenly used (or misused) concepts of modern educational science is Vygotsky's notion of the **zone of proximal development**. Vygotsky introduced this notion in the context of the elaboration of his developmental theory and used it to express a developmental potential of children that went beyond their actual, independent performances. Vygotsky was convinced that the real potentials of an individual could only be revealed under conditions where this individual was assisted by someone else. He conceived of this surplus of a person's possibilities as an area of developmental potentials that could be turned into effectively appropriated qualities by education. That is why he promoted a view on education that was based on assistance of pupils in the performance of new actions, that aimed at the mastery of these actions, and - to put it in yet another way - that went ahead of the actual developmental achievements of the pupil.

This approach of education - with Davydov I would call it 'Developmental Education' - attributes a clear responsibility to educational systems. One of the basic aims of this kind of education is the enhancement of the child's abilities to participate in sociocultural activities (like industry, literature, science, discussion on environmental problems, education of the younger generations, sports, to name just a variety of examples). Many people agree that Vygotsky's notion of the zone of proximal development is a useful concept to promote the development of children into this direction as it capitalizes strongly on assistance and collaboration. However, the real content of the notion of the zone of proximal development still remains confused by

different interpretations. One of the most quoted definitions of 'the zone' is the one given in Vygotsky (1978), describing this zone as the *discrepancy* between that actual level of development of the child, and the level of performance a child can reach when it gets adequate help from adults or (more capable) peers.

This discrepancy formula, however, can be criticised for two reasons. It remains unclear what kind of actions should be promoted for constructing the child's way through the zone and in order to optimize the child's abilities for participation in socio-cultural activities. From an emancipatory perspective this developmental aim has to be taken essentially as including the improvement of the child's critical abilities and meaning making capacities. As a consequence, any conception of the zone of proximal development should include some heuristic for capturing this critical dimension in development. From the Vygotskian perspective it is consistent to presume that the enhancement of the child's meaning making capacities, the improvement of its abilities to participate constructively in the cultural process of meaning making, is one of the basic aims of any educational processes. The promotion and development of this so-called **semiotic activity** (i.e. the reflection on the interrelationships between sign and meaning, see van Oers, 1994; 1996a; in press) is one of the basic developmental aims of the work with the child in the zone of proximal development.

It is clear, that from this perspective we must be critical of approaches that try to organize the course of development and learning through 'the zone' on the basis of one-sidedly defined structures. Stone (1993) already pointed out that the concept of scaffolding as an instructional way of organizing the pupil's zone of proximal development actually limits the pupils' opportunities to acquire insight into the dynamics of the open-ended process of meaning making. As an externally defined structure, scaffolding may prevent the pupil to make sense of his own learning process and curriculum. Scaffolding even may prevent the pupil to become a responsible agent of his own learning process, as it tries to set out a learning path for the pupil, and prescribes choices about meanings of the steps to be taken. As a result, the child will not learn the semiotic mechanisms involved in reflecting on the course of learning processes and the construction of knowledge. Hence, the critical dimension of learning in the zone of proximal development will not be fostered.

A RECONCEPTUALISATION OF THE ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT

The interpretation of the zone of proximal development exclusively from the viewpoint of the discrepancy formula can be criticised for another reason. This definition turns out to be too restricted while it wrongly suggests an exclusive focus on the individual, as if the zone is an individual quality (see also Van Oers, 1996d). A more elaborated view on the notion of the zone of proximal development, can be found when we take into account Vygotsky's contention that **imitation** is the core element

of the notion of the zone of proximal development (see for example Vygotsky 1982: 250): "*in educational psychology it should be acknowledged that a child can go to a higher intellectual level by collaboration; by way of imitation a child can proceed from what he can do now to what he couldn't do before. The whole significance of education for development is based on this principle. Basically this constitutes the content of the concept of the zone of proximal development. Imitation, if broadly understood, is the main form by which education influences development*" (It is interesting to note that this section was not translated in Thought and Language as it was first published in English (1962)).

In his explanation of this imitation concept Vygotsky clarified that he had an intellectual process of reconstruction in his mind and not a process of copying actions. By elaborating Vygotsky's statement of the relationship between the zone of proximal development and **imitation**, we can conceive of 'the zone' as **a co-constructed sociocultural activity in which the child wants to participate and in which it can participate meaningfully, and within which the development of the participants is based on a coordinated exploration of possible actions within that activity.** I think there is every reason to call this imitation, as the child re-constructs a pre-existing activity, but we must also keep in our minds that the child makes its own version of this activity. The resulting activity is not completely the adult's nor completely the children's. It is a newly co-reconstructed version of the original activity by all participants.

This approach is consistent with Wertsch (1985: 70-71) where he concludes about the zone:

"*Hence the zone of proximal development is jointly determined by the child's level of development and the form of instruction involved; it is a property neither of the child nor of interpsychological functioning alone*"

In the past ten years we collected and studied many collaborative activities (at different developmental levels) in which teachers and pupils, or pupils in groups, were **exploring** the possible actions of an imitated sociocultural activity. In this paper I will analyze some illustrative cases (one in the context of learning activity; 13 year old pupil; one in the context of play activity; 5-6 year old pupils).

SOME RESEARCH EXAMPLES

LEARNING ACTIVITY AS IMITATED SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITY

The first example is drawn from a classroom discourse between a teacher and a 13 years old student about a physics problem. In accordance with our interpretation of learning activity as a discursive practice of knowledge production (see for example also van Oers, 1996b), this teacher tried to organize the learning activity of the students in this physics class as a discourse-based process of knowledge construction

by the students. As such this process starts from the assumption that the course of the conversation should not be directly dominated by the teacher alone, and by his knowledge of the right answer. The teacher should maximally try to imitate the scientific discourse of argumentation, scrutinizing arguments, grounds, conclusions, as well as use symbolic representations as a means for solving the problem.

This approach to learning contrasts sharply with a direct instruction approach in which the teacher tells the student the required principle to be learned, that the student can apply afterwards, and tries to memorize for future use. It will be clear that the imitation of the scientific discourse can never be a pure copy of a scientific discourse (which?, whose?), but actualiy it is e re-enactment of a style of conversation, a personalized reconstruction of a speech genre (in the sense of Bachtin). This imitated sociocultural activity is - according to our definition given above - basically a co-constructed zone of proximal development. In the conversation that occurs the teacher and the student are exploring what kind of utterances will be acceptable for both of them, considering their shared wish of solving a problem. Their approach is typical for a scientific discourse, focusing on problems, conditions, arguments and counter-arguments, conclusions etc (Lampert 1990; Forman et al. 1996; Forman 1996; Hicks 1996). By acting this way, the teacher and the students are actually playing a language game, negotiating different meanings, and **exploring the zone of proximal development**. They are accomplishing a discourse activity in which the student and the teacher want to participate, are allowed to participate, and are able to participate in a meaningful way, given their level of actual development.

In the classroom conversation that we observed, the problem situation was the following:

Two identical bottles had been filled with an equal amount of water. One of the botles is insulated with a layer of cotton. By measuring the temperature of the water in both bottles at different moments, we know that the temperature in both bottles has dropped 5°C in 2 minutes.

This situation is described for a class of pupils in secondary school (The observation was taken from a classroom conversation in a school for secondary education in the middle of the Netherlands. The school endorsed the Vygotskian view of developmental education and was seriously trying to implement that approach in all its lessons (anno 1986)). One 13 year old boy was asked to explain how both bottles could show this fall of temperature. After a while this boy gets involved in a conversation with the teacher. He reads the description aloud, and asks what 'identical' means. The teacher explains (''identical means 'the same' ''). The pupil finishes his reading. Long pause.

It was obvious in the classroom - as can be seen from the protocol as well - that the teacher did not want to directly instruct the pupils how to find the solution to this problem. Instead the teacher started a conversation that articulated the dynamics of scientific reasoning (argumentation, questioning, falsifying etc.). In that way the

teacher and the student played the game of science (they imitated a scientific reasoning process, but they made their own version of it). In the conversation we could identify several strategies of the teacher that we take as essential for making this discourse a real exploration (rather than a direct instruction from the teacher (T) to the student S). In the following we analyse the conversation by highlighting these characteristics, and by illustrating them with episodes from the classroom conversation:

- *teacher and student try to narrow down the precise conditions of the process:*

(1) S: 'Did the temperatures fall in both bottles at the same time? Or did one bottle go before the other? Was the fall of temperature faster in one of the bottles?'

(2) T: 'What do you mean?'

(3) S: 'Well, if the temperature in one of the bottles started to go down at an earlier moment....'

(4) T: 'They went down in the same time'

(5) S: 'At the same moment?'

(6) T: 'Yes'

(7) S: 'Is there a cap on the bottles?'

(8) T: 'Yes'

(9) S: 'Maybe the cotton is not well-fixed onto this bottle?'

(10) T: 'Yes, the cotton is precisely fixed around the bottle'

- *the teacher does not too easily endorse the solution principle:*

In the initial stage of the conversation, when the student is still trying to settle the values of the initial conditions, the pupil hits on an utterance that actually includes one basic principle for solution (the temperature difference between the water in the bottle and the environment). Nevertheless, the teacher does not endorse that principle immediately then (which would have been a form of direct instruction), as they are still exploring the conditions:

(14) S: 'Maybe ...if the bottle without cotton is put in a warmer environment, then it will keep the warmth, so it will cool off slower and then it cools off as much as the bottle with the cotton layer'

(15) T: 'Yeah, could be, but that was not the situation; let met tell you this: it may be that the initial temperatures of the bottles were not equal

(16) S: 'Really?'

- *revoicing the other's utterances* (O'Connor, Michaels 1996)

During the argument the teacher repeats the student's utterances in a slightly modified, more specific manner. This 'revoicing' may have an instructional function, but it can be seen as a conversational strategy as well, summarizing elements of the argument as clear as possible:

(28) S: 'The bottle with the cotton cools off slower, but it is 30°, the one without cotton 50°; If the latter had been 30° as well, it would have cooled off faster, but not now'

(29) T: 'So, the colder the bottle, the faster it cools off? A bottle of 30° looses per 2 minutes more temperature than a bottle of 50°?
[Teacher revoices the explanation of the pupil]

(30) S: 'Perhaps that is not correct, but it grows colder, it arrives faster at a cold level, for it was not so warm in the beginning'
[*Pupil introduces a condition not given, namely that the bottles should cool off to the same temperature*]

(31) T: 'It arrives earlier at, say, 20°? Is that what you are saying?
[Teacher revoices again]

(32) S: 'Yes'

- *falsifying wrong assumptions*

At different moments in the argument the student seems to rely on a presumption that the cooling off process should end at the same temperature. This condition was wrongly introduced by the student. At one moment the teacher draws the student's attention to this erroneous presumption:

(31) T: 'It arrives earlier at, say, 20°? Is that what you are saying?

(32) S: 'Yes'

(33) T: 'But the problem does not say that both bottles had to arrive at the same time at, say, 20°. They just cool off an equal amount of degrees in the same time'
Teacher repeats the problem and refutes the notion of an equal final temperature

(34) S: 'But it doesn't say 'till what temperature they cooled off, either'

When the student later on in the conversation hit again on this issue the teacher said:

(38) T: 'Okay, but still the problem doesn't say "arrive at 20° at the same moment", but "in 2 minutes they cool off equally".

(39) S: 'Oh'

- *providing symbolic mediational means*

To recapitulate the situation and support the argument the teacher introduces a graph (drawn by hand) as a mediational means for regulating the process of conversation. The conversation that follows is based on this graph:

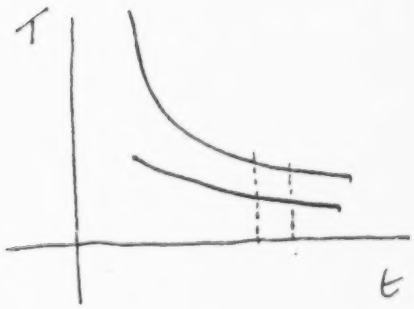

Figure 1. Symbolic mediator of the conversation

- *teacher simplifies the situation:*

in order to put more systematicity into the shared investigation, the teacher eliminates one condition (insulation), to find out what will happen: he introduces some hypothetic values in the graph; during the process the teacher frequently revoices the student's utterances in a concluding way:

(40) T: 'Picture this: two bottles - both not insulated - ; one is 50°, the other 30°. Which one cools off fastest?

(41) S: 'Hum...cools off fastest?'

(42) T: 'Yes, not which one will be the first at 20°, but which one looses the most warmth in a minute?'

(43) S: 'I think the one with 50°'

(44) T: 'Yes!' The bigger the temperature difference with the environment, the bigger the loss of warmth. That's one.*[teacher revoices concludingly]* And further: the better the insulation, the faster the cooling-off'? *(in an asking intonation)*

(45) S: 'Yes'

(46) T: 'Okay, so the one with 50°, without insulation, cools off faster for it is warmer and not insulated. *[teacher summarizes]*

(47) S: 'Well, then I think that the bottle without cotton must be colder, colder water; hence it can cool off less; so the bottle with the cotton must be warmer'

(48) T: 'The insulated bottle cools off faster because it is warmer.....

(49) S: 'yeah, but it is insulated so the other one cools off faster,..eh... less....., less fast...' *[student takes over the argument started by the teacher]*

(50) T: 'Both bottles cool off at the same rate, don't they? 5° in 2 minutes. *[teacher summarizes; revoices the student's conclusion]*

(51) S: 'Yeah, right'

During this conversation the teacher tries to get the student involved in a conversation that is modelled after a scientific speech genre (argumentation). When we interpret this process as an attempt at imitation of this speech genre, we ca~ conceive of this process as a co-constructed sociocultural activity that the student clearly cannot yet carry out independently. He needs help to accomplish this activity in a reliable (culturally acceptable) way. So the teacher and the student have collaboratively constructed a zone of proximal development in which they are exploring what can be said or done and which parts the student can adopt.

ROLE PLAY AS IMITATION

Similar processes of imitation can occur during young children's role play activities. For 4- 7/8 year old children, role play is their leading activity in which they imitate sociocultural activities. They can (and want to) participate meaningfully in these activities but cannot carry them out completely independently. Characteristically, during the play the children are frequently looking for new expansions of that play activity. While playing in shoe-store (that the children built together in one corner of their classroom), they played the role of store-keeper, customer, but gradually new roles (and sub-activities!) were introduced (putting shoes on a shelf, labeling shoe-boxes etc.) Here we see how children are exploring the play activity for potential new roles to play, new activities to perform (van Oers 1996c).

In a recently conducted study of expansion processes during play activities in the context of a Dutch play based curriculum for young children (This curriculum was developed by Frea Janssen-Vos and her colleagues from a Dutch innovation institute (APS, Utrecht). The curriculum is based on a Vygotskian approach to education. The study was conducted in a primary school (Julianaschool) in a small city (Schagen) in the Netherlands (I am grateful to the school and the teacher for helping me to carry out this study). We observed how the teacher could constructively provoke new activities starting from one central theme (castles). The teacher introduced the theme of castles by stories, a visit to a real castle, and by theme-related books and pictures that the children brought form their homes. In the classroom different expositions were established related to castles. In the context of this theme the children performed a great variety of activities related to castles (such as reading about castles, playing out stories in castles, constructing miniature castles from all kinds of materials. When the children were deeply engaged in a variety of theme related activities, the teacher sometimes gave the children suggestions of how to elaborate their activities into new activities. Different expansion of the activities were made.

By doing so, the children and the teacher were actually collaboratively exploring the zone of proximal development in order to find new ways of acting. Actions the children could be meaningfully involved in. We were curious how far the exploration could go, how far the zone could be stretched without loosing the child's voluntary participation in the exploration. I decided to follow one 5 year old boy (Stephan) more closely, trying to promote new activities within the context given and registrating how far his activity could be stretched, without spoiling the quality of the play of the boy and without destroying the meaningfulness of his actions. The strategy was just to give the boy hints for new activities and leave it up to him whether to take it up or not. When he picked up an expansion, I observed him and talked with him about his activity in order to find out if it made any sense to him.

One morning the teacher had provided a construction plan for a castle, and discussed with the children how they could read this kind of plans.

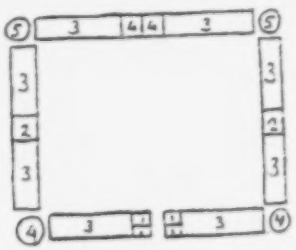

Figure 2. Plan of a castle

After that introduction Stephan and another boy were invited to build this castle with blocks in a corner of the classroom. The boys started building this castle on top of this plan. They played "construction site". They were constantly looking at the plan by carefully checking whether their building did correspond to the requirements of the plan. For doing this, they had to push aside parts of their building to see what the plan indicated. After about twenty minutes they finished their castle and started playing with it. They put small puppets and animals in it and were busy making it look like a real castle where people were living. Then we suggested Stephan that he could make a drawing of the castle as it was now.

Stephan picked the idea up but he could not just copy the plan given by the teacher, as this was hidden under the castle. So he started drawing the castle directly from their building, including the towers, walls, battlements (see top of drawing), gate and barred windows (in the centre). See figure 3.

Figure 3. Stephan's picture of the castle

To begin with we see that Stephan did not copy the teacher's plan in any strict way. He even rotated his plan 90° as compared to the teacher's. In the right lower corner of this drawing he wrote a numeral (4) indicating how many blocks should be put on top of each other:

Figure 4. Stephan's indication of the number of blocks

However, he did not seem to be satisfied with how he wrote the numeral, and explained to me "This is a four". When he continued, he shifted to an analogical way of symbolizing quantities, by drawing small circles in the blocks. Notice that this was also his own invention! This was not given in the teacher's plan. In the block at the left he drew 4 circles at first, but after checking he erased one by crossing it out (see drawing, figure 2).

Here we see that the boy worked reflectively, permanently checking his drawing with the building. Obviously, he was imitating his teacher's drawing, of the plan, but he made his own version of it, while doing this. The boy was carrying out some sort of semiotic activity reflecting on the relationship beween a sign (his drawing) and its intended meaning (the castle). In this manner he completed the drawing of his castle.

When he said he was ready, I asked him if he was ready now. Stephan then took another piece of paper and started drawing another castle that he called 'the back-side'.

Figure 5. 'The back-side castle' by Stephan

After finishing this drawing he took some glue, and sticked the two drawings back to back to each other (after checking they had the same upright direction). I asked him whether there shouldn't be numerals at the backside, he answered decisively:

"No, the numerals are already on the front".

Obviously, for him the two drawings were related by a one-to-one correspondence, and the boy used this relationship in his reflections on the drawing and its correspondence with the real castle. Although the activity of drawing may look very abstract, for the boy it was really an expansion of his initial constructive activity with the castle. He remained very involved with his drawing activity embedded in the castle building activity. In this expansion we saw different new elements emerging, that were not generated by the object of the building activity itself:

* inventions of new and functional ways of representing quantities
* use of symbolic representations,
* reflection on sign - meaning relationship
* use of abstract relations (one-to-one correspondence).

By exploring together the activity of the child and provoking new actions we were actually exploring the zone of proximal development of the child. Only by doing so, we could show that these 'abstract' - and in a way mathematicians like - actions were within the reach of the child. The teacher can build on this knowledge the future interactions with this boy.

CONCLUSIONS

In the cases that I described here, it is shown how a teacher can collaboratively build up a zone of proximal development with a student/pupil by constructively imitating some sociocultural activity. By working together they can explore this zone for new potential actions that could be a basis for future learning processes. This interpretation of the zone as a sociocultural activity that a pupil can and wants to participate in and in which he is also accepted as a participant, turns out to be a useful conception for

the analysis of educational processes with both younger (4-7/8) and older (13 year old) children.

In these cases described here, it turned out again (van Oers 1994, 1996a) that the act of symbolizing and reflecting on the interrelationship between symbol and meaning (i.e. semiotic activity) are essential means in the process of collaborative exploration of the zone of proximal development probably favouring both the child's critical attitude in the reconstruction of cultural activities, and the teacher's ability of responsive teaching.

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LÄHIMA ARENGU TSOONI UURIMINE

Resümee

Üheks hariduse eesmärgiks on laste võimete arendamine sotsiaalkultuurilistes tegevustes osalemiseks. Tänapäeval on saavutatud üldine kokkulepe, et Võgotski lähema arengu tsooni kontseptsiooni rakendamine soodustab laste kultuurilist arengut hariduskeskkonnas. Emantsipatsiooni seisukohalt on vaja nimetatud eesmärki oluliseks pidada, kuna selles sisaldub ka lapse kriitiliste võimete parandamine. Seetõttu on vajalik lähema arengu tsooni mõiste ümbervaatamine. On väidetud, et toestiku mõistet võib sellest perspektiivist vaadelduna kritiseerida. Veelgi enam, lähema arengu tsooni interpreteerimine üksnes tegeliku ja potentsiaalse arengutaseme vahe kaudu osutub liiga piiratuks. Võgotski väidet lähema arengu tsooni ja imitatsiooni seotuse kohta edasi arendades võime kujutleda tsooni kui koos konstrueeritud sotsiaalkultuurilist tegevust, mille käigus osavõtjate areng toetub antud tegevuse poolt võimaldatavate toimingute koordineeritud uurimisele.

Viimase kümne aastat jooksul uurisime erineval arengutasemel ühistegevusi, milles õpilased koos õpetajatega või õpilaste rühmad uurisid mõne tegevuse võimalikke toiminguid. Käesolevas artiklis analüüsin mõningaid illustreerivaid juhte tsoonist kui koos konstrueeritud sotsiaalkultuurilisest tegevusest (üks 13-aastase õpilase õppimistegevuse, teine 5-6-aastaste laste mängutegevuse kontekstis). Neil juhtudel selgus, et sümboli ja peegelduse esinemine sümboli ja peegelduse vahelises vastastikuses seoses (nt semiootiline tegevus) on lähima arengu tsooni ühise uurimise protsessi oluliseks vahendiks, mis ilmselt soosib nii lapse kriitilist suhtumist sotsiaalkultuuriliste tegevuste rekonstruktsiooni kui ka õpetaja valmisolekut tundlikuks õpetamiseks.

III PLAY IN THE KINDERGARTEN

Acta Universitatis Scientiarum Socialium et Artis Educandi Tallinnensis. 1998. A12: 75-83

Maritta Hännikäinen

JOINT ACTION IN YOUNG CHILDREN'S PLAY IN THE DAY CARE CENTRE

Annotation

This article deals with an analysis of a game "nursing babies" in a group of three 2- 3-year-old girls in a day care centre. The play situation creates successive tryouts of different play actions. Reciprocal exchange of play actions is not present. Successive construction of play actions is carried out by the youngest girl in her attempt to reconstruct every play action of the two other girls. Tentatively we can suppose that the following succession can be discerned in the development of role play at the initial stage: support through space and play materials from adults - successive play actions - reciprocity and exchange of play actions.

There are certain basic features that form the preconditions for well-developed role play. These features are ability to differentiate between reality and play, imaginary situation, construction of joint play theme, complementary roles, communication in role and metacommunication, turn taking and reciprocity, abstraction of rules, acceptance of advice or corrections from the play mates and shared understanding (Bretherton 1984; Elkonin 1980; Garvey 1977, 1982; Vygotsky 1976). The features are jointly constructed and shared by participants.

Role play that meets all the requirements of well-developed role play appears at the preschool age (cf. Piaget 1962; Vygotsky 1976). However, young children already at the transition stage of role play, also show different kinds of sharing and collaboration in play. They express interest in peers' play material, observe each other, share goal orientation, negotiate and communicate meanings (Verba 1994). Often communication takes place through actions. The children, for instance, run after each other, jump across the furniture or throw things in turn and laugh. In this way they build and develop the feeling of intimacy and intersubjectivity (Bamberg 1981; Budwig, Strage, Bamberg 1986).

The day care centre as such forms a natural context for play and being together. But what are the possibilities of the centre to contribute to the development of play into well-developed role play? What is the function of adults and that of the children?

The daily schedule planned by the adults determines the play time. In addition to time, adults organize also space to play in, at least for the young children. Further, the play process of young children is materially supported and often initiated by adults.

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Sometimes the educators also participate or interfere in play in other ways in order to guide or facilitate it. Yet, the children also contribute to each other's play: they may, for instance, take leading roles and directly tutor the less experienced peers, act as models for them or just let the younger ones be close to them. How this takes place will be discussed below by making use of one play episode of three girls in a Finnish day care centre. The length of the episode is 19 minutes.

NURSING BABIES

Venla (3 years 6 months) Anni (2 years 7 months) and Katju (2 years 1 month) have their turn to play 'the medical game'. Some other girls would also like to take part, but their turn had been the day before. The educator, LEENA, has organized the game. Objects related to the game are at hand, such as doctors' (nurses') caps, armbands with red crosses, and on the table there is some examination equipment and medicine bottles and cups. On the bench there are two baby dolls, on the table another. The game takes place in the home play corner.

Katju has heard LEENA speaking with the observers of the play turns.

Katju to the camera-man: "It is Katju's turn."

She goes to the side to look at LEENA helping Venla and Anni tie the caps and armbands signifying the roles of doctors. Venla and Anni are laughing.

LEENA: "Come along, Katju, let's dress you, too. Then all of you can begin to nurse the dolls. Oops, this cap is too big for you, let's take a smaller one."

Anni pointing at the equipment: "What do we do with these?"

LEENA: "They are used for nursing babies. You can start to examine them, to see what is the matter with them."

LEENA ties the armband on Katju.

Venla and Anni look at the stethoscope. Venla is wondering what to do. Anni presses it against her chest.

Anni: "This is used this way."

Venla and Anni go to examine the dolls on the bench. Katju looks at the equipment on the table. She takes the stethoscope and presses it against her chest just as Anni did. Venla and Anni come to take some equipment from the table. Katju plays alone, she takes bottles in her hand and pretends to pour something into her hand. Then she sits down on the chair. She points a syringe at her arm and looks at LEENA.

Katju: "Medicine."

LEENA: "Yes, this is medicine. That's what you can give to the babies in case they need some."

Venla takes part in the discussion: "Just put it in the mouth."

Katju listens to Venla very attentively. Then she goes to Venla and Anni to the bench. She points the syringe at the dolls' mouths, as if giving medicine. Anni puts her medicine syringe directly into the doll's mouth. Katju looks carefully, and acts in just the same way, pushing the syringe directly into the mouth of her doll. The girls go to take more things, for instance, an earlamp from the table to the bench.

Venla: "And then we examine the ears."

Katju goes closer to see what Venla is doing.

Venla to Katju: "The ear will be examined."

Katju begins to do the same by pushing the syringe into the ear of her doll. Venla realizes that.

Venla: "No, no, in the mouth."

Katju puts the medicine in the mouth of the doll.

Anni pointing at a clinical thermometer: "What is this?"

Venla: "It is a thermometer. It belongs here."

Katju follows what Venla is doing and tries to do the same. She goes and takes an earlamp and a ruler from the table, looks at them hesitatingly. Venla also takes a ruler and puts it inside the doll's jacket, as if taking temperature. Katju gazes at what Venla is doing and tries to do it in the same way.

Venla: "There is a thermometer. You measure with it."

Katju looks at the ruler with surprise. She takes the earlamp and presses it against the neck of the doll. She sets the lamp back on the table, looks at Venla and Anni. Venla and Anni keep on talking with each other, saying what they are doing, whereas Katju is silent. Venla puts a cup she has had in her hand on the table and goes away. Katju immediately takes the cup and carries it carefully to the dolls on the bench, as if not to spill anything. She sets the cup against the doll's lips, as if giving medicine. Then she goes back to the table where Venla and Anni are playing and talking silly, goofing around and laughing loudly. Katju looks at LEENA, points at the doctor's cap.

Katju to LEENA: "Take this away."

LEENA takes the cap off.

Katju pointing at the armband: "Take this away, too."

LEENA: "Isn't it good, either?"

Katju takes the stethoscope and puts it around her neck. She realizes at once that it wasn't right.

Katju to the camera-man: "It went wrong."

Then she goes to the table, sits down and listens to Venla and Anni who are now playing on a mattress next to her. They have their dolls with them.

Venla: "Now we are examining."

Katju goes to the girls, also with a doll, comes back to the bench and listens to the tummy and the head of her doll with the stethoscope. Her eyes follow Anni and Venla all the time. Then she takes her doll and an earlamp and goes to the girls. Now she examines the ears of her doll with the lamp. Venla is undressing her doll. Katju also begins to undress her doll but she has some problems to open the bottons of the doll's outfit.

Katju to LEENA: "[Take] these away."

LEENA: "Just do it by yourself."

Katju tries again, and succeeds in taking away one shoulder strap of the outfit.

Katju: "I could do it myself!"

Then she tries to take the other shoulder strap very patiently. Venla and Anni are laughing at the table but Katju goes on taking off the doll's outfit. Venla takes the chair on which Katju had been sitting earlier. Katju leaves the doll on the mattress and goes to the girls. She tries to get the chair back by drawing it with her hands but Venla resists.

Katju to LEENA: "My seat."

LEENA: "Listen, Katju, it's Venla's seat now."

The observer gives another chair to Katju. Katju sits down, removes the stethoscope, looks at the medicine bottle in her hand and follows what Venla and Anni are doing. They are speaking, laughing and having fun. Venla straightens her armbands. Katju looks at her own arm.

Katju: "Where is mine?"

LEENA: "It is here, we took it away. Do you want to have it back?"

Katju: "Yes."

LEENA ties the armband on Katju's arm and puts the cap on her head.

Katju to the camera-man: "Look!"

She sits down at the table and looks at the medicine bottles, opens and closes them, pretends to pour medicine into a cup. Anni and Venla laugh hysterically. Things are falling down. They speak of that and laugh. The bottle cap in Katju's hand drops, too.

Katju to LEENA: "It dropped."

LEENA:"Just pick it up."

The place seems to be too crowded, the things drop. Katju inadvertently kicks the table so that it shakes. Venla becomes upset, probably because of these annoyances.

Venla: "Katju, I'm not your friend."

Anni: "I'm not yours either, 'cause I'm Venla's."

Venla: "I'm not Katju's friend."

Anni to Venla: "Are you mine, are you?"

The situation continues for a while as before: Venla and Anni keep each other company and close to them Katju examines the equipment on her own.

THE OBSERVING EDUCATOR

In this day care centre, during the proper morning play time, the children are divided into two groups, one playing in the bedroom, the other in the grouproom with an educator in each. This arrangement allows the children to have a more peaceful play time but it also assures the sufficiency of play material. The division, usually based on alternation, is carried out by the educators before play time. According to the educators the basis of division, taking turns, is not absolutely categorical because the "friendly relations of the morning" are often considered. If some of the children have been playing together earlier during the morning, it is not useful to separate them. Sometimes educators also think the composition of the group over by using educational arguments. Developmentally, in one composition the children might benefit from play more than in another.

The environment of the medical game is organized by the educator, Leena, with the help of space arrangements and play material like garments, dolls and doctor's office setting with examination instruments. With this equipment and by helping the children to dress the caps she initiates the game. By answering Anni's question in the beginning of play ("What do we do with these?") she gives some advice connected with a physician's or a nurse's role ("They are used to nursing babies..."). However, she does not introduce concrete actions or a chain of actions how to examine and nurse. Nor does she make any suggestions to support joint play but directs her words to individual children. Nevertheless, the children at once begin to play with enthusiasm. It is obvious that the play material provided by the educator, not the idea of nursing, inspires their game (cf. Vygotsky 1976:544-548).

While the girls are playing the educator remains further away and from there answers the requests of the girls. For instance, to Katju's question-like statement "Medicine." she reacts with "Yes, this is medicine. That's what you can give to the babies in case they need some." She also resolves practical problems by putting on and taking off the cap and armband of Katju. Moreover, she interferes verbally in a conflict situation about the possession of the chair. Nevertheless, what she is mainly doing is observing the game.

PLAYING TOGETHER OR SIDE BY SIDE?

The older, more experienced Venla and Anni are of great significance for Katju. They provide the motivation for Katju and suggest ideas for her actions. They act as guides and models for her who imitates their play actions. However, the play actions of Venla and Anni are still also limited to only certain parts of the whole play structure. Like Katju, Venla and Anni act on the basis of immediate situational impulses. They

might enact roles of physicians but the equipment especially seems to direct the play actions and events. They are rather manipulating objects than playing with roles. Neither do they have a real plot in their game but they have a joint theme and they use metacommunicative utterances since they speak of the play actions with each other. They can differentiate between play and reality and act in an imaginary situation. - The last-mentioned also concerns Katju.

Venla and Anni share the idea of playing by chatting, giggling and laughing. By so doing they manifest shared understanding and intersubjectivity. They take turns, but each new instrumental action is a separate episode and is connected with other episodes by having fun. Exchange of play actions is not present, they are actually playing in parallel since both are doctors nursing their own respective patients. Play like this can be called associative play (e.g. Parten 1932). Venla and Anni play together but because of the deficient reciprocity we cannot speak of co-construction of a joint role play. At any rate, they are together all the time, enjoying each other's company and thus producing joint action.

Although Katju has mainly an outsider position, something is shared with her, too: she is in the same context with the others, doing the same (cf. Budwig, Strage, Bamberg 1986). She is carefully examining the play material and attentively observing the play actions of Venla and Anni. By imitating she tries to reconstruct their every action. Venla and Anni also help her by advising verbally and by showing how to carry out the actions correctly. Yet they do not include her in their own game. At the end of the episode this becomes especially obvious: Katju is completely excluded from the game.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS: FROM OBSERVATION TO SUCCESSIVE PLAY ACTIONS

Joint role play is learned in the second and third year of life through manipulative and experimental actions, solitary role play and interaction with other persons (e.g. Fenson 1985), all of which were included in Katju's medical game. However, this is only an interpretation. Of course, we cannot be completely sure whether Katju's activity was at all symbolic and whether she at all enacted a role.

Piaget (1962:126) states that symbolic identification with other people is preceded by imitative behaviour and is expressed verbally before the symbolic action. From this viewpoint it is difficult to judge what Katju was doing. She was mainly silent and thus she did not reveal whether while examining and nursing her doll she identified herself with a nurse or a physician or whether she was solely imitating and experimenting the actions observed.

Parten (1932) defines observation in play as an activity in which the child follows the play of other children, talks with them, advises them but does not participate in the

game. Katju was not observing in this way or with this in mind. She was observing in order to learn, not to teach.

Nor was she 'just observing' however. By observing others the child actively acquires new impressions, compares his or her experiences with activities of the children observed, gets new ideas for his or her own play and learns new norms of social interaction (Weber 1986). Observing others leads to imitation, to do the same as the others. This was also an outcome of Katju's observation behaviour.

What is the impact of imitation in play for the child? Elkonin (1980) points out that an imitating child not only follows the actions of the other children, their model, but she constructs an image of this action. This construction cannot be copying since a model is "not an image of another, but the image of itself through another" (cited in Elkonin 1993:34). The acceptance of a model is the actor's change in himself or herself. This was also apparent in Katju's play. Her alert and concentrated face and extreme patience while performing the play actions revealed that something was also happening in her mind.

Vygotsky (1990) emphasizes that when imitating in role play, the child works creatively with his or her experiences. He or she combines impressions and builds new realities for his or her own use. Piaget (1962) also considers imitation as a generator for new actions. This seems to be what resulted in Katju when she imitated the older girls. Her first separate play actions at the beginning of the game developed into successive series of actions in the course of the play session. Even more, we could assume that by imitating Katju also adopted the general play patterns of the day care centre. In this way she contributed to the development of human culture, since "cultural continuity is guaranteed through imitation" as Vandenberg (1981:360) puts it.

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ÜHISTEGEVUSE OSA LASTEAIA VÄIKELASTE MÄNGUS

Resümee

Lasteaias loovad täiskasvanud väikelastele võimaluse mängida ja on sageli mängude initsiaatoriteks. Kaaslaste rolliks võib väikelaste puhul olla kogenenumate laste

mängu jälgimine. Mis sellistes olukordades juhtub, kuidas mõjub eelneva ühismängu faas noorimale mängijale? Käesolev artikkel analüüsib kolmeliikmelise grupi 2–3-aastaste tüdrukute arstimängu päevahoolduskeskuses. Täiskasvanud on loonud arstimängu jaoks sobiva mängukeskkonna ruumikujunduse ja mängumaterjalide abil. Mängusituatsioon tingib erinevate mängutegevuste järjestikuse kasutamise. Naljatades pakuvad kaks vanemat tüdrukut välja idee koos mängida. Nad vahetavad rolle, kuid iga uus tegevus on erinev episood ja seotud teiste episoodidega lõbu kaudu, mis see lastele pakub. Vastastikku mängutegevusi ei vahetata. Mängutegevuste järjepidevat tõlgitsemist teostab noorim tüdruk, kes püüab jäljendada kõiki kahe vanema tüdruku poolt sooritatud mängutegevusi. Seega võime oletada, et rollimängu arengu algstaadiumis võib eristada järgmist järgnevust: toetus täiskasvanutelt ruumi ja mänguvahendite näol – järgnevad mängutegevused – vastastikkus ja mängutegevuste vahetamine.

Acta Universitatis Scientiarum Socialium et Artis Educandi Tallinnensis. 1998. A12: 84-93

Gunilla Lindqvist

THE AESTHETICS OF PLAY. A DIDACTIC STUDY OF PLAY AND CULTURE IN PRESCHOOLS

Annotation

On the basis of Vygotsky's cultural historical theory and theories of drama pedagogy, an approach to play is developed, which recognizes a dynamic connection between children's play and the cultural influence of their environment. A cultural theme was tried out in a didactic project: Alone in the big, wide world. The narrative was the main thread, drama pedagogic methods were used, and the structural basis was the form of play. The project was carried out at a day-care centre in Karlstad, Sweden. The results show that a common playworld helps developing play in preschools.

THE AIM OF THE STUDY

In my thesis "The Aesthetics of Play" I have attempted to develop a creative pedagogy of play for use in Swedish preschools. Two of the main issues in the study were how can aesthetic activities influence the way children play and what is the link between play and culture?

THE AMBIVALENT APPROACH TO PLAY IN SWEDISH PRESCHOOLS

What gave rise to this study was the current criticism of the way in which preschools today regard play as a "free" activity and an expression of children's self-activities and natural progress (which is also reflected in several psychological theories of play), instead of adopting the approach that play is a cultural activity. Despite the fact that preschools in theory recognise the importance of play, it is often neglected in practice. Play has an ambivalent role in Swedish preschools, which means, for example, that preschool pedagogues are unsure of whether they should influence children's play or not.

There is thus a dualistic element in preschool pedagogics of play which becomes particularly noticeable when looking at how preschool pedagogues relate to modern culture and their attempts to avoid mass-cultural influences. This makes the preschool an outmoded establishment, isolated from the rest of society. Children of today are both precocious and immature at the same time; they know of everything before

they have had a chance to experience things themselves (Ziehe 1986, 1989). Since children's knowledge is fragmented, providing them with a chance of understanding their experiences in a meaningful context is becoming increasingly more important. This has made play a particularly important phenomenon in our modern society. Why does play not have a clearly defined role? In my view, the reason is that the Swedish preschool tradition has not developed a cultural, aesthetic approach to pedagogy. Instead its fundamental theories have rested on theories of psychology, in which art and culture have not been represented, and this has meant that the artistic subjects have become an issue of secondary importance. Drama, for example, has been used in preschools for a number of years without ever really influencing preschool pedagogics of play. (Öksendal 1984).

THE NEED FOR A CULTURAL, AESTHETIC APPROACH

It is thus my opinion that there is a need for an all-embracing cultural theory which can describe the link between play and culture. This is true of Vygotsky's theory.

My interpretation of Vygotsky's (1966) theory of play is based on the ideas he expressed in "The Psychology of Art" (1971) and it differs from the interpretation of the theory made in the spirit of Leontiev and Elkonin, which focuses on reproduction rather than production (creativity) and adult intervention in play rather than a creative approach.

In my opinion, Vygotsky's ability to develop a theory of cultural history stemmed from the fact that he started by studying man in relation to art and literature. His cultural historical theory of signs is a direct continuation of the aesthetic theory he presented in "The Psychology of Art". According to Vygotsky, our consciousness is dynamic, reflecting the surrounding culture both in form and content. In the book "Imagination and Creativity in the Childhood" (1930), Vygotsky's ideas about art are linked to his theories in general and he describes how we create our conceptions through our imagination. The imaginary process is a creative interpretation process. Play forms an early basis for children's creativity.

With the aid of Vygotsky's theories, I have proceeded to develop an approach to play which emphasises the relation between play and art and children's cultural development process. Play is a dynamic meeting between the child's internal activity (emotions and thoughts) and its external ones. Opposed to these ideas Leontiev and Elkonin set out from the material reality, when they are explaining the concept of imagination. In their opion imagination develops from external action; it is not a result of a meeting between internal emotions and the child's experiences. Thus play is a reproduction of reality and the child is not dramatizing it is simply reproducing what is typical and general. According to Vygotsky the imagination is carried out in action through a creative inversion process in which emotion colours the action. Play is thus an aesthetic process which creates new meanings. This is why play reflects reality on a deeper level and why it should never be confused with realistic renderings

of everyday actions. Play is like a photographic negative of everyday life in the same way as art, Vygotsky writes. The form of play takes shape within a set framework. Actions can, for example, be abbreviated so that "when children play, one day may pass in 30 minutes and 100 miles may be included in five steps. Internal and external actions are inseparable: imagination, interpretation and will are internal processes in external action" (Vygotsky 1966: 15). According to Vygotsky, play is related to drama and its form corresponds to the aesthetic form of the fairy-tale.

A child's relationship with its surroundings is dramatic and fraught with conflict. Children's play include themes which relate to fear/safety, weakness/strength, restrictions/freedom, power/equality etc. - themes which are also found in children's literature (Sutton-Smith 1971, 1981).

My thesis includes a didactic project carried out at the day-care centre Hybelejen in Karlstad during a 12 month-period. The two people involved from the University of Karlstad were a teacher of drama and myself, a teacher of pedagogics. We acted as supervisors and provided inspiration, but the staff at the day-care centre were the ones who actually put the ideas into practice. The project represented a form of action or intervention research, which meant that adults deliberately "intervened" to influence the children's potential play progress in accordance with Vygotsky's (1978) ideas on the "zone of proximal development". The theme was *Alone in the big wide world* and the pedagogic ideas involved developing the potential ability of play to provide our existence with meaning as opposed to an instrumental line of thought.

HYBELEJEN BECOMES A PLAYWORLD

"One dark and chilly morning in February, Fear is lying under the bed. The children at the day-care centre Hybelejen are sitting in a semi-circle around the bed. The atmosphere in the room is spooky."...

This scene was the introduction to the theme "Alone in the big wide world" and it was obvious that Fear's presence created the atmosphere necessary for the initial meetings between the children and the adults.

Concretising fear in the shape of an adult gave the feeling an identity. The children told one another what they were afraid of and played and painted ghosts and monsters to challenge their own fear. The first time Fear visited Hybelejen, she brought a hat box full of little ghosts with multi-coloured spots on - Frightings. (Fear's own face would always come out in spots every time she was afraid of something.) These Frightings were a vast source of inspiration to the children, who used them for all sorts of games, from playing families to playing shop or hunting. When Fear brought the hat-box full of new monsters at her second visit, the children were already playing with heart and soul. Particularly the older children were delighted; they built nests and terraria for the snakes, lizards and spiders and took turns in choosing the most terrifying animal as their "cuddly toy" for the afternoon rest.

The aim of the theme "Alone in the big, wide world" was to reflect loneliness and fear in different ways. For example, Fear had a brother who could only be contacted through whistles: the character in Samuel Beckett's play "Act without words". To this man, reality seems absurd. He has been abandoned and rejected. He never manages to reach the jug which is lowered down from the ceiling right in front of his eyes. His movements are controlled by a whistle. This play was performed by one of the pedagogues for all the children, irrespective of age.

The children were noticeably affected by the performance and the sympathy they showed with the man in "Act without words" indicated that children are able to recognise the importance of different situations, but that they experience it differently depending on their individual age.

During spring, the Finnish-Swedish author Tove Jansson's playworld filled the day-care centre with life. First the pedagogues performed "The Invisible Child" as a puppet show. This is the story of Ninny, who was badly treated by a lady and, as a reaction to this, made herself invisible. Until she comes to the Moomin family, the only sign of her is a little bell which has been tied around her neck, but thanks to their fair and decent treatment of her, she gradually reappears. This story showed another side of loneliness: the feeling of being worthless and denied an existence. Moreover, the puppet theatre inspired the children to play with puppets and soon the existing doll family grew larger.

The next book was "Who will comfort Toffle?", the story of which runs parallel with the opening scene of the theme: Toffle is lying alone in his bed, fearfully hiding under the quilt. He can hear Groke howling. Once Fear had introduced the story to the children, they soon ventured into the world of the book. Some of the illustrations were copied on overhead sheets and projected onto the walls. Each illustration represented a different scene from the book. The children were able to see what it felt like being Toffle alone in the bed - or a Fillyjonk, or Snufkins sitting in a summer meadow.

When Toffle had reached the Hemulen's happy party, the children were ready to invite him to the day-care centre. They turned it into one big fun-fair and everybody, both children and adults, dressed up for the occasion. There were clowns, Fillyjonks and Hemulen figures, there were popcorn and iced cake. Suddenly, they saw Toffle standing outside the balcony door. He was shy, but the children invited him to join the party. One of the boys went up to him and tapped him timidly on the back: "Hey, you," he said in a loud voice, "we have a book about you. Do you want to read it?" Toffle was delighted and they all compared the fun-fair at the day-care centre with the one in the book.

A few days later, when the class went for a picnic up by a small lake close by, the children found a message in a bottle in the water. It turned out to be a letter from Miffle, which made the children very eager to find her and save her from Groke.

By coincidence, a few rocks in the forest close to the day-care centre looked just like the Black Mountain Chain in the book. Just imagine the children's surprise when they found Miffle sitting high up on the rock a couple of days after the letter in the bottle! Suddenly, they saw Toffle walking towards them with the letter in his hand. Then they heard a terrible howl: OOOOoooooo... The bushes creaked and rustled and they caught a glimpse of Groke's dark appearance. Toffle started chasing after her, closely followed by the older children. As in the book, Toffle "warmed to the fight" by dancing "a wild and warlike reel" before sinking his teeth into Groke's heel. The hunt was over! Afterwards, Groke remained standing by herself on the side, until the children summoned up enough courage to invite her to have some squash and sticky buns. They were all fascinated by her. One of the younger boys howled like Groke - he was Groke! Some children started chasing one another, biting one another on the heel. Others played families with Toffle and Miffle and ended up inviting the entire Moomin family to a party as part of the game. When Toffle and Miffle were preparing to leave for their honeymoon trip, the children sensed a feeling of an adventure in the air and longed to venture forth on travels of their own. "Why don't we make a balloon," they said after having read the book "The Dangerous Journey" (Jansson 1978). No sooner said than done: with Susanna's balloon as a model, they all made their own balloons from old newspapers and paste. But how would they be able to make a large balloon so that they could all go on adventurous trips together?

PLAY AS ADVENTUROUS JOURNEYS

Travelling and adventures had become the obvious focal point at the day-care centre. A "real" balloon was created by turning a table up-side-down and covering it with material. The balloon part was made from chicken wire covered with material, which was fixed to the ceiling. Colourful ribbons connected the balloon to the "basket".

Numerous trips were made in that balloon. The children travelled to desert islands, visited the children in the story "Hat-house" (Beskow 1931), went to Pippi Long-stocking's island in the South Pacific, to foreign countries and to the jungle which had been created in the mattress room, based on the story "Children in the Jungle" (Krantz, Lfgren 1959). The starting point of this story is the play act itself and the journey used the monotony of everyday life as its springing board: "One rainy day, Olle was lying on the nursery floor, finding life unusually boring..." The journey starts in the nursery and the initiator is the nursery troll, Ture, who paints scenes with his paint brush. In the story, Anna wants to be an Indian princess with a crown on her head, but the crown has been stolen by the calamangs - wild cannibals who live way into the jungle. This is an adventurous journey with the same formula that is so common in children's play, i.e. "averting a threat" (Garvey 1977).

CHALLENGING THE CHILDREN'S ZONES OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT IN PLAY

Travelling to the jungle together with the adults (who were acting the characters from the book) challenged the children's zone of proximal development. The adults first dramatised the contents of the book and painted the jungle together with the children before they all set off on adventurous journeys to the jungle. Ture the troll accompanied the children to the jungle where they learnt to steer the balloon, hunt and avert threats in the jungle by use of a magic jingle: "Tingeli tang - sleep calamang". The adults brought different parts of the story to life. The children grew aware of the formula of play and since they were familiar with both the story, the jungle setting and the balloon, they were at liberty to improvise with this wide register to choose from. The adults were "teachers-in-role" as described by Heathcote and Bolton (1979). The dynamic play challenged the children's imagination and engaged them in problem solving. Rodari (1988), an Italian writer of children's books and famous for his connection with the pedagogy of Reggio Emilia, has described how "fantastic hypotheses" can be used to stimulate the imagination, i.e. learning to tell a story and "establish an active relationship with reality" in the extension by asking the question: "What would happen if...?". This is a question implicit in adventurous games.

The adventurous games caused the playworld to expand. Once the action had been brought to life by the adults and children together, it became part of the children's play and games. The adventurous journeys also provided different play settings: the home, the journey and the adventure. These settings were all charged with meaning. Ture the troll's wardrobe, which stood in a corner, became "the home". Here the children often played family games. The balloon, which symbolised the journey, had been placed right in the middle of the main playroom and it was often full of travellers. The adventure was to be found in the jungle (in the mattress room); an excellent play setting. Both boys and girls would put on their boots and "sun-helmets" and go hunting for tigers and snakes, using the binoculars they had made themselves. Every morning, the oldest girls would go into the jungle to dance.

A PLAY PEDAGOGY BASED ON THE RELATION BETWEEN PLAY AND CULTURE

The results of this study show that it is easier to develop play in day-care centres if the children share a *common playworld*. To develop the play, we had to find a *theme* (a content) which the children could take an interest in and relate to. The fact that there are traces of basic conflict situations in the stories children tell and in their play suggests that they often relate to their surroundings in a dramatic way. This theme is apparent in the fairy-tale, in which the hero leaves home in search of adventures which involve averting various threats. The theme "Alone in the big, wide world"

included such fundamental conflicts to which the children could all relate and which made the theme dynamic. However, to avoid a situation where play was reduced to a simple game of tag without a plan of action, these fundamental conflicts had to be brought to life within the framework of a dramatic text. The literary text and its *dramatic qualities* was actually what finally determined whether the play could be developed or not. Dramatic action cannot exist without a plot, or "action within the action". In a common playworld, each child can create his or her own meaning and context and develop his or her own play actions. This requires a multi-layered text, a multi-dimensional literary text, to prevent the play from remaining a basic copying act.

The adults needed to *dramatise the action* in order to provide play with a meaning. The *characters* played by the pedagogues were of particular importance in bringing the play to life because they created a *dialogue* between the adults and the children which opened the door to the fictitious world. The pedagogues became *mediators*. During the course of the theme, I saw the pedagogues become someone in the eyes of the children. They turned into exciting and interesting people. In a way, assuming roles liberated the pedagogues by enabling them to step out of their "teacher roles" and leave behind the institutional language which is a part of this role. The children were enticed into the dialogue by the characters the adults dramatised and as a result, both children and adults shared a common playworld.

At Hybelejen it was interesting to see how children of different ages interpreted and dramatised the theme together with the adults. Side by side they produced *multi-dimensional* play, each with their own text in a universal context. This was possible because children have an ability to move from internal to external levels in the fiction. They are part of the universal context at the same time as they are creating their own text. The youngest children were the ones responsible for creating an underlying atmosphere and keeping it alive, while the older ones made numerous interpretations and transformations into new worlds. At the same time as they were taking part in the universal story, they also played their own games, either in the shape of a pattern of action or a story. The experiences were enhanced by the fact that the children were from different age groups.

Ambiguity is an important characteristic of art and play. Swedish researchers into children's literature are involved in an active discussion on "ambivalent texts" (Shavit 1980), i.e. texts that address readers on different levels. These can be texts which have obviously been written with both children and adults in mind, but also texts which can be read from different perspectives at different points in time. Examples are the classics "Winnie the Pooh" and "Alice in Wonderland", but also the Moomin books belong to this category. The authors have deliberately experimented with the forms of their book and these stories are all multi-layered: they can be read at a very basic level as well as a very sophisticated one. This means that children's literature can be regarded as a much wider genre than simply texts for children.

This study has shown that when adults consciously apply drama and literature, the children's play will be affected and together children and adults will develop culture. Art and literature can give meaning to our existence and the connections which exist between children's play and children's culture constitute a basis for a play pedagogic working method in preschools. This "curriculum approach" is reminiscent of Egan's (1986) ideas of curricula for stories and narratives.

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MÄNGU ESTEETIKA. MÄNGU JA KULTUURI DIDAKTILINE UURIMUS EELKOOLIASUTUSTES

Resümee

Käesolev didaktiline uurimus mängu esteetikast vaatleb mängu, draama ja kirjanduse vahelisi seoseid. Uurimuse eesmärgiks on luua kreatiivne mängupedagoogika Rootsi koolieelsete lasteasutuste jaoks.

Uurimus on vastureaktsiooniks koolieelsetes lasteasutustes üldlevinud suhtumisele, et mäng on *vaba* tegevus ja laste iseregulatsiooni väljendus, mitte aga kultuuriline tegevus, mis puudutab nii lapsi kui ka täiskasvanuid.

Võgotski kultuurilis-ajaloolise teooria (mida, vastandatult Leontjevi teooriale mängust kui reproduktsioonist, interpreteeritakse esteetilistel ja loovatel põhimõtetel)

ja draamapedagoogika teooriate alusel arendatakse välja lähenemine mängule, mis tunnustab dünaamilist sidet laste mängu ja keskkonna kultuurilise mõju vahel.

Didaktilises projektis katsetati kultuuriteemat "Üksinda suures laias maailmas". Juhtlõngaks oli jutustus, kasutati draamapedagoogika meetodeid ja struktuurseks aluseks oli mänguvorm. Projekt viidi läbi päevahooldekeskuses Karlstadis.

Tulemused näitavad, et ühtne mängumaailm aitab kaasa mängu arengule koolieelsetes lasteasutustes. Mitmekihiline tekst tagab selle, et mäng ei muutuks ühedimensiooniliseks ja stereotüüpseks. Näitemänguline tegevus on väga oluline, kuna see annab mängule tähenduse. Täiskasvanute poolt näideldavad tegelased annavad mängule elulisuse ja panevad aluse dialoogile lastega nii, et neil on lihtne mängumaailmaga liituda. Maailm, tegevus ja tegelased segunevad omavahel. See toob kaasa mitmekesisuse, mis mängu arendab ja annab kõigile osalejaile võimaluse kohtuda ühises mängumaailmas.

IV PLAY AND LEARNING

Acta Universitatis Scientiarum Socialium et Artis Educandi Tallinnensis. 1998. A12: 97-106

Gunni Kärrby

PLAY AND LEARNING IN PRESCHOOL

Children's conceptions of play and learning related to the educational philosophy of the preschool.

Annotation

Children between 4-6 years of age were observed in three different situations (free play, a structured learning situation and optional theme work planned by adults) and interviewed afterwards. The children participating in the study had a more clear and differentiated conception of play than learning. Play is a highly complex and goal-directed activity in children's mind and in contrast learning is seen as a process aimed at acquiring certain skills. In the two preschools compared in the study play activities were richer in the first one and product orientation of learning was underlined in the other one.

Most psychologists agree that play is the dominant mode of activity in preschool children. Not all psychologists agree, however, that children learn by playing. According to Piaget play is an expression of an assimilative process characteristic of the intuitive stage. Learning, on the other hand, depended on accommodation, the basic process for cognitive and logical growth leading to conceptual thinking.

In opposition to Piaget, Vygotsky and other Sovjet psychologists regarded play as a basic activity in the socialization process. Through play, the cultural meanings and basic social norms were transmitted to the child. Play was unfulfilled wishes. Through play the child learned to transform his/her motives and needs into socially acceptable modes of handling reality. In this process, symbolic thinking and the development of language were important constituents.

In preschool practice play was the basis of the whole development of the child according to Fröbel, the founder of the preschool movement. When scientific thinking began to influence educational practice, the perspective on the child was split into areas of cognitive, social, motor and emotional development. Play seemed to be neglected. In line with psychoanalytical theory, play was seen as a diagnostic tool for the purpose of finding repressed impulses, hidden conflicts or developmentally weak areas.

Not until lately, during the last ten years or so, play has been rediscovered. Play is not only regarded as an important activity for the child's psychological development but also for giving basic experiences leading to learning. According to the theories of

Jerome Bruner, play is closely connected to exploration, problem solving, creativity and art expression (Bruner 1960, 1966).

In the present study, play is viewed from a constructivistic perspective. In play activity children construct their views of the world. In social interaction with peers, the child constructs social strategies such as coping and negotiation in order to understand the norms and values of its society and culture. Interesting studies have been carried out by e.g. Corsaro in the USA and Italy (Corsaro 1985). Other research shows that playful activity leads to higher educational achievment in school compared to the training of particular skills. Professor Gardner at Harvard university in USA has developed a theory of multiple intelligences and suggests that the development of different intelligences is related to explorative activity in play (Gardner 1983). The importance of play and intuitive activity for the development of creativity generally is the theme of a book on Creative minds where Gardner traces the development of creative genius to childhood background (Gardner 1993).

Play is one of the most common activites in preschool. In an earlier study of 115 full time and part time preschool classes in Sweden we found that about 10% of all activities were classified as fantasy play according to the same classification as was used in the Oxford Preschool Research Study presented by Sylva in 1980. The same percentage was found in British preschools.

The results also showed that play was related to structural features like small group organization and a balance between free and planned acitivites. There was also more dialogue conversation between the children in groups spending their time in fantasy play (Kärrby 1991).

In a new research project with the aim of exploring play activity from [illegible] of view, an observational and phenomenographical approach was used (Marton 1981, 1993).

The basic questions were:

What mental processes characterize play and learning in 5-6 year old children.

How do 5-6 year old children conceive of play and learning?

Are children's conceptions of play and learning related to the educational philosophy of the preschool?

From our earlier results we had the hypothesis that different kinds of educational environments might have an influence on the children's conceptions of play and learning. In order to explore the relationship between the children's conceptions of play/learning and the teachers' educational philosophy we chose two kinds of pre-schools (daycare centers) which were well known to us as to educational approach. In Rosen, play, fantasy, and creative language experiences were emphasized. In Tuvan, the preschool program was characterized by a didactic learning oriented view. There were more educational activities directed toward specific areas of knowledge

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and the teaching of skills and techniques. In both preschools the teachers were highly engaged and competent.

METHOD

In each preschool two classes with children between 3 and 6 years old were chosen. All the children between 4 and 6 years old were observed in group activities and interviewed. There were about 6-8 children who were studied in each group. The children were observed in three kinds of situations: 1) Free play, 2) Structured learning situations and 3) Situations planned by the teachers from some pre-determined theme and where the children were free to choose activities.

Two researchers spent one week in each of the two preschools. The children were observed for 25-50 minutes in the three kinds of situations. Notes were taken of the events and activities in which the target children were engaged. Immediately after each observation two or three of the observed children were interviewed one by one in a separate room. First they were told to express their experiences of the observed situation. The children were also asked what intentions they had in the different activites, about their conceptions of play and learning, if they were aware of the teacher's intentions and if they conceived of any connection between play and learning.

A couple of weeks after the observations and interviews with the children, the teachers were interviewed. In group interviews the teachers in the two classes (3 persons in each) were asked about their conceptions of knowledge, learning, play, teaching and working methods. The interviews were video recorded and later made into a video film production (Play and Learning in Preschool, video 1993).

RESULTS

Generally the children were able to recount, describe and explain in a richer way what had happened during free play than during learning situations. Activities during free play were described as whole events. They had a definite theme like having a doll play party, construct a trap, play the spook game, etc. Detailed accounts of the theme was presented like who played what role, the rules that governed the play, what was allowed to do or not. Much behavior was explained that had not been observed or could be interpreted from the observation. E.g. girls chasing boys seemingly just to catch them was explained in the interview. It was a kissing game. When the boys were caught they were kissed.This did not happen in the presence of adults.

While play was more often desribed in whole sequences, learning situations were desribed as secluded events. There were no intentions by the child. The goal was to do what the teacher wanted. Usually the children did not know why they should learn what the teacher expected. While play was a collective enterprise, learning was seen from an individual point of view. What the child did, said or learned was separated

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from the rest of the group. The child had the conception that he/she learned something but not the rest of the group.

In contrast to observation of free play it was easier to interprete observations of learning situations from our point of view. We could easily define the educational setting and the teacher's intensions. We found, however, that we had often misinterpreted the child's own experiences of the situations.

How do children conceive of play and learning?

Example from an interview with Josefin (6 year old girl)

Interviewer (I): You also play here in the center, don't you? What do you do when you play?

Josefin: Hm...

I: When you do as the teachers say, you learn (Josefin had explained this earlier in the interview). But when you play, what do you do?

Josefin: When you are on this matress you can do a somersault backwards. You do like this (shows).

I: Do you do that when you play?

Josefin: No. We do like this in the gymnastics lesson.

I: In the gymnastics lesson?

Josefin: When we do like this (somersault forwards) we play ... but when we do like this (backwards) we learn.

Most of the children had a clear definition of play. The children differentiated play from other activities that are often called play by adults like having fun, chasing each other, etc. For the children in this study play was activity based on fantasy, imagination, roles and rules. It was a complex mental activity not easily observed or interpreted by teachers and researchers.

Example from an interview with Tomas (5 year old boy)

Tomas: But... you know, some people when they walk on traps, they don't fall down.

I: What people?

Tomas: I don't know, but Erik went where it was a trap and he didn't fall into it.

I: How old is Erik?

Tomas: But he worked with the trap too. He wanted to show that the others could also walk on the trap. So he walked and didn't fall down.

I: It was curious.

Tomas: But I think it was too much sand then.

In situations directed by the teacher with the intention of teaching, the children are usually well aware of the learning process.

Example from an interview with Peter

I: Do you think that you learned anything during the dance lesson?

Peter: Yes, I think so

I: What do you think?

Peter: The first song I think I learned

I: Is it good to learn things?

Peter: Yes

I: Why is is good to know things?

Peter: Because you don't forget songs and such things

I: Why is it good to know songs?

Peter: I don't know

To sum up the results:

Five to six year old children's conceptions of play and learning

Play is conceived as activities that

involve pretending and fantasy

center around a theme

follow certain rules

Play is not

doing things (e.g. constructive activities like building etc)

mastering things (e.g. bicycling, jumping, etc)

experiencing things (e.g. having fun, to swing, roll on the ground, chasing, etc)

Learning is conceived as

teaching (transmission of knowledge from somebody who knows to somebody who doesn't know, learning from books, etc.)

learning a particular thing (like singing a song, a skill like reading, etc)

related to a particular setting (structured situations like group assembly, classroom setting, etc).

Table 1.

Characteristics of play and learning in Rosen and Tuvan

CONCEPTIONS FOUND IN THE INTERVIEWS WITH THE CHILDREN	
Rosen (play oriented)	**Tuvan** (didactic oriented)
Play is learning	Play is not learning
Learning is a process	Learning is a product
Learning is connected to all things in life	Learning is connected to school knowledge
Learning is a way of life	Learning is a technique
Learning occurs all the time	Learning is the result of teaching
Being taught is hard work	Being taught can be fun
Learning is seen as development	Learning is seen as achievment
OBSERVATIONS OF PLAY	
Great variety of play	Small variety of play
Content of play was often connected to subject theme	Content of play is independent of subject theme
More fantasy play	More rule structured
More creative play	More conventional play
Long play periods	Short periods of play

Clear differences in the conceptions of both play and learning could be found between the two preschools. In the play oriented preschool, Rosen, play was often related to mediated fantasy activity like tales and stories, TV programs, etc. The play activities were more rich in fantasy, more varied and complex than in the learning oriented preschool. There were longer play themes, extending sometimes for a whole day. Often the same theme reappeared in different versions for weeks. Children in this preschool had the conception that they learned things in play, e.g. how to be tricking playing trappers, how to arrive at agreements in play or to transmit ideas to younger children like the beauty of flowers. Play and learning were integrated and occurred all the time.

In Tuvan, with a didactic view on learning, the children differentiated play from learning. Learning was seen as something that resulted in a product. It was often connected to a certain technique that was taught by the teacher. In learning situations

children often showed an achievment orientation. At the same time it was experienced as fun. In Rosen, directed teaching was by some children experienced as hard work.

The observations revealed that there was a greater amount and variety of play in Rosen than in Tuvan. The play was more complex and creative. As more time was allowed for play the children could go on with a particular play theme for a long time, sometimes for days and weeks. There was plenty of space both outdoors and indoors in both preschools but the environment was structured in different ways. More fantasy material was available in Rosen such as an old boat in the playground. Children were allowed to hide in narrow spaces for role play.

In Tuvan children were observed to play conventional role play like family play most often. Play was interrupted by structured activities and did not last for as long periods as in Rosen. There was no opportunity for the children to develop a play theme as the time schedule was strictly directed by the teachers.

Table 2.

Conceptions of the functions of knowledge and structure among the teachers

CONCEPTIONS OF KNOWLEDGE	
Rosen (play oriented)	**Tuvan** (didactic oriented)
Learning is a matter of:	Learning is a matter of:
Understanding/Comprehension	Techniques
Thinking for oneself	Instruction
Seeking one's own knowledge	Being taught
Learning for life	Learning for school
Learning to question	Confidence/security
Play as an end in itself	Play is a means to someting else
Play and learning are integrated	Play and learning are separated
CONCEPTIONS OF STRUCTURE	
Subjects are seen in context	Subjects are separated
Flexible time structure	Fixed time structure
Great freedom af activity	More supervision/control

The children's conceptions clearly reflected the attitudes toward play and learning among the teachers. In Rosen, the play oriented preschool, learning was seen as a process including play activities as well as directed activities. There was a common

conception both among children and teachers that learning is going on all the time. Play was not separated from learning. According to the teachers, to gain knowledge is a process that is determined by motivational forces in the child. The adult's task is to give the child ample opportunities to express his/her intensions and make the necessary provisions to find solutions to problems that makes it possible for the child to reach the goal. This was done in both play and planned learning situations.

In Tuvan, the didactic learning oriented preschool, the teachers'conceptions of learning was more narrow. Learning was conceived of as a product. The task of the teacher was to formulate educational goals and through different techniques provide the child with learning situations that helped the child to fulfil the teacher's goals. Learning was clearly oriented to school. The long range goal was to prepare the child for school.

Conclusions that can be drawn from the study are:

Preschool children ages 5 to 6 have more clear and differentiated conceptions of play than learning.

For a child at this age play may be a highly complex and goal directed activity.

Play is by children conceived of as a sequence of events that are meaningful . The affectional element or motivational force characteristic of play merges with cognitive processes that help the child construct his own unique conceptions of the world. Play is a creative process. A girl said: "In fantasy play you have to think for yourself". In accordance with professor Gardners view, play is a serious business that can be compared to the work of an artist.

In contrast, learning is seen as a process aimed at acquiring certain skills.

The results suggest that complexity of play is a collective process connected to the educational environment of the preschool. A program rich in fantasy content, generous time for play and the teacher's perspective on play as a valuable tool for learning seem to be necessary conditions for the integration of cognitive and affective processes in play.

Today there are social and political forces in our western societies working in the direction of an earlier school start. Preschool practice may sometimes have the same function. Recent research shows that in the long run the cognitive development of the child is not favoured by an early school start or training in school like tasks. On the other hand, activities that are based on the child's own intentions may lead to complex mental processes. In line with the ideas of Fröbel, the whole child has to be engaged. A better understanding of what affective forces and strategies are revealed in play may give us a more clear picture of the development of cognitive processes. A valuable tool in this respect is interviewing children. This can be done in everyday practice as well as in research work.

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MÄNG JA ÕPPIMINE KOOLIEELSES LASTEASUTUSES

Resümee

Uurimisprojekt mängust ja õppimisest käsitleb kahte koolieelset programmi, millest üks rõhutab mängu ja loovaid tegevusi (Rosen) ja teine ettevalmistust kooliks (Tuvan). Igas koolieelses asutuses jälgiti kuut kuni kaheksat nelja- kuni kuueaastast last.

Jälgiti kolme liiki situatsioone: 1) vaba mängutegevus, 2) struktureeritud õppimistegevus ja 3) õpetajate poolt planeeritud tegevused, mis annavad lastele vabaduse valida. Jälgimisele järgnenud intervjuudes väljendasid lapsed oma arusaamist mängust ja õppimisest. Personali intervjueerides jälgiti nende mängu ja õppimise kontseptsiooni, kuidas nende arvates lastele kõige paremini teadmisi edastada ja millised on koolieelse lasteasutuse optimaalsed eesmärgid.

Kahe lasteasutuse laste hinnangud mängule ja mängu tähtsusele õppeprotsessis olid erinevad. Rosenis, mängule orienteerunud lasteaias, olid lapsed arvamusel, et mäng ja õppimine on integreeritud. Õppimine toimub kogu aeg igas olukorras. Tuvanis, koolile orienteerunud lasteaias, oli õppimine seotud kindlate formaalsete olukordadega ja sisaldas oskuste ja tehnikate omandamist. Kahe lasteasutuse õpetajate suhtumises konteksti rõhutamisse, sisu tähendusse ja integreerimisse, probleemidele orienteerumisse ja laste algatusse ilmnesid suured erinevused. Roseni õpetajate lõppeesmärgiks oli õpetada lastele iseseisva mõtlemise oskust kogu eluks. Tuvanis olid õpetajad orienteerunud laste kindlustunde suurendamisele neid kooliks ette valmistades. Tulemused näitasid, et laste mängu/õppimise kontseptsiooni ja õpetajatepoolse koolieelse programmi interpreteerimise vahel oli ilmne side. Uuritud probleem on eriti oluline Rootsi jaoks, kus võeti vastu uus seadus, mis lubab lastel kooli minna kuueaastasena, mitte seitsmeaastasena, nagu varem. Uurimus toob välja mõned olulised erinevused kooli ja koolieelsesete lasteasutuste praktikas rakendatavates õpetamisfilosoofiates.

Acta Universitatis Scientiarum Socialium et Artis Educandi Talllinnensis. 1998 A12: 107-111

Aldona Vaichiene

LITHUANIAN FOLK GAMES - A REFLECTION OF ETHNIC CULTURE

Annotation

In this article a specific type of play - makings-play is described. In a makings-play an adult calms or amuses children, jumps them on knees, claps and flaps a child's hands. These folk games are accompanied by a song and may be grouped into imitative or acting games or roundelays.

Moving to music - musical games - are a great influence in the musical education of pre-school children.

A musical game is an indispensable means of perceiving the external world, evaluating it. While playing children express their environment, achieve greater mastery of the various phenomena of life.

Games are one of the most popular and beloved fields of activity in children's life. There are various opinions regarding the origin and nature of games. According to G. Spenser, game is the unburdening of an excess of accumulated energy, while K. Groos (1899) explains games as children's essentialization of functions later necessary in adult activity. In their games children model various aspects of the surrounding world as well as what is happening in it. The playing child experiences joy, pleasure, giving free rein to its creative abilities and initiative. At the same time playing furthers its mental and physical development.

There are various kinds of game. They may be grouped according both to the age and sex of the participants and to the contents and functions of the games themselves.

The simplest games are melodies accompanied by gestures, performed by adults for the very young children, termed makings-play. Makings-play is very old.

According to P. Jokimantiene (1970), makings-play is an intermediate genre between a game and a song. The difference between game and makings-play is that in a game a child plays independently, with an adult or another child, while in a makings-play it is made to play by an adult. Grown-ups, calming or amusing children, jump them on their knees, on their foot, clap and flap a child's hands. This is done to make the child happy and cheerful, to develop its attention, to make it quiet. While singing or reciting a single-strophed text adults make gestures, or sometimes they sing songs

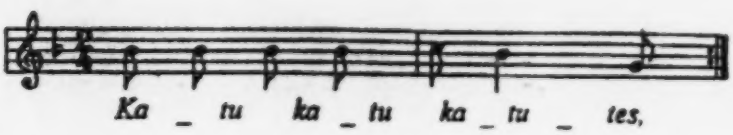
without accompanying them with gestures. Thus in Lithuanian folklore we may distinguish between two groups of makings-play :

1) singing accompanied by gestures;

2) singing unaccompanied by gestures.

Gestures have a secondary role in makings-play. They are just an illustration, an imitation of an action. Some of the makings-play are performed without gestures, using only expressive, mimic, intonations. Short merry songs help the child to sing along.

Calming, quieting or amusing a child is connected with invented but compelling stories from the world of animals. Adults sing and make rhythmical gestures of riding, preparing porridge or other actions, they tell about a mouse, about milk pouring out, etc. In this way the recited words arouse corresponding images in the children's minds, images connected with imitated or direct actions, just like the laughing and tickling used to amuse the children. The mood of all such games is made clearer by simple melodies with a corresponding rhythm, most often syncopated (*katu katu katutes*).

KATU KATU KATUTES

Katu katu katutes,
Ladu, ladu, ladutes.

The Lithuanian folk games accompanied by a song text may be grouped into

1) imitative games;

2) acting games; and

3) roundelays.

In imitative group games the players mimic through their gestures various work processes or the growth of a plant. They join their hands and show how a plant is sowed, grows, flowers, is cut, pulled up, etc. When they imitate work processes their

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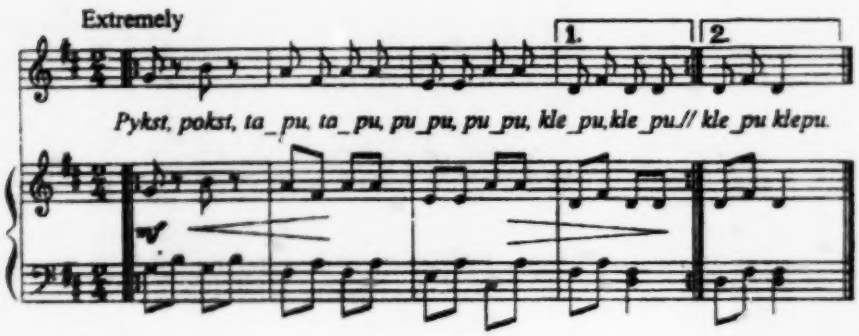
gestures represent weaving, milling, etc. The gestures performed in these games are closely connected with the musical rhythm and the text of the song.

Pykst, pokst, tapu, tapu
pupu, pupu, klepu, klepu.

Acting games belonging to the second group display a more dramatic element. In these games every player has his or her own role. Games in this group depict the fauna, wild and domestic animals and birds.

The third group is made up of roundelays.The games belonging to this group do not represent anything. The players simply join their hands and go round singing, clasping hands.

All the above-mentioned games have emerged from authentic Lithuanian folk life as well as being representations of the surrounding environment, as is shown by their magnificent pithy expressiveness, drawing on the nation. Game melodies are usually major.

The history of a people, its work and animals, are reflected in its folklore. Games are among the genres that mirror a people's culture, helping us to gain a better understanding of the customs, aims, joys and griefs of a people living in one period of history or another.

Folklore is a prerequisite if a nation is to maintain its originality; it is full of folk fancy, folk poetics.

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LEEDU RAHVUSLIKUD MÄNGUD - ETNILISE KULTUURI PEEGELDUS

Resümee

Eelkooliealiste laste muusikalises kasvatuses on suur mõju muusika järgi liikumisel – muusikalistel mängudel.

Muusikaline mäng on välismaailma tunnetamise hindamatu vahend, selle hinnang. Mängides annavad lapsed edasi arusaamist ümbritsevast maailmast, mis aitab neil paremini hakkama saada erinevate elujuhtumustega.

Mängud on laste elus kõige populaarsemaks ja armastatumaks tegevusalaks. Mängude iseloomust ja päritolust sõltuvalt pakuvad mängud erinevaid võimalusi. G. Spenseri järgi laevad mängud maha liigse akumuleerunud energia. K. Gros selgitab mängu kui laste poolset selliste funktsioonide mõtestamist, mida neil hiljem täiskasvanutele omastes tegevustes vaja läheb. Mängudes modelleerivad lapsed ümbritseva maailma erinevaid külgi, kaasa arvatud sündmused, mis sel ajal aset leiavad. Mängiv laps kogeb rõõmu, rahulolu, tema loovad võimed ja algatusvõime elavnevad. Samal ajal aitab see kaasa tema füüsilisele ja vaimsele arengule.

Mängud on erinevat tüüpi. Neid võib liigitada kas vanuse või soo järgi või siis sisu ja funktsioonide järgi.

Lihtsaimad mängud on meloodiat järgivad liigutused, mida täiskasvanud väga väikeste lastega läbi viivad. Neid mänge kutsutakse liigutusmänguteks ja nad pärinevad väga vanast ajast.

P. Jokimantiene järgi on liigutusmängud mängu ja laulu vaheline žanr. Erinevus mängu ja liigutusmängu vahel seisneb selles, et mängu mängib laps iseseisvalt, koos täiskasvanu või teise lapsega, samas liigutusmängus suunab lapse mängu täiskasvanu. Vanemad, kui nad kas rahustavad või lõbustavad last, hüpitavad teda põlvedel või jalgadel, patsutavad või löövad lapse käsi kokku. Seda tehakse, et last lõbustada ja rõõmustada, et tema tähelepanu arendada, et teda vaigistada. Lauldes või ühesalmilisi värsse lugedes teevad täiskasvanud liigutusi, mõnikord lauldakse laule ilma liigutusteta. Leedu folkloorist võib leida kahte liiki liigutusmänge:

laulmine liigutuste saatel;

laulmine ilma liigutusteta.

Liigutused mängivad liigutusmängudes teisejärgulist rolli. Need on vaid illustratsiooniks tekstile, tegevuse imiteerimine. Mõnesid liigutusmänge mängitakse ilma liikumiseta, kasutades vaid väljendusrikast miimikat, intonatsioone. Lühikesed lõbusad laulud kutsuvad last kaasa laulma.

Lapse rahustamine, vaigistamine või lõbustamine on seotud väljamõeldud, kuid muljetavaldavate lugudega loomariigist. Täiskasvanud laulavad ja teevad rütmilisi ratsutamise, pudrukeetmise või muude tegevustega seotud liigutusi, nad räägivad hiirest, piimast, mis maha voolas, jne. Sellisel kombel esitatud sõnad kutsuvad lapse vaimusilmas esile vastavad kujundid, mis on seotud imiteeritud või vahetu tegevusega, nagu näiteks naermine ja kõdistamine, mida kasutatakse laste lõbustamiseks. Kõikide mängude meeleolu selgitamisel on oluline vastava rütmiga, milleks on kõige sagedamini sünkoop, lihtne meloodia.

Leedu rahvuslikud mängud, mis järgivad laulu teksti, võib grupeerida alljärgnevalt:

imiteerivad mängud;

tegevusmängud;

ringmängud.

Grupimängudes imiteeritakse mingit tööd (nt telgedel kudumist, veskitööd jne) või taime kasvamist. Mängijad ühendavad käed ja näitavad, kuidas mingit taime külvatakse, kuidas see kasvab, õitseb, kuidas ta lõigatakse, nopitakse jne. Nendes mängudes sooritatud liigutused on tihedalt seotud muusika rütmi ja laulude tekstidega.

Teise rühma tegevusmängud sisaldavad enam näitemängu elemente. Nendes mängudes on igal mängijal kanda oma roll. Selle grupi mängude temaatikaks on fauna, kodu- ja metsloomad, linnud.

Kolmas rühm koosneb ringmängudest. Selle rühma mängud ei esinda mingeid konkreetseid valdkondi, mängijad ühendavad käed ja liiguvad ringikujuliselt, lauldes ja käsi plaksutades.

Kõik ülalnimetatud mängud on välja kasvanud leedu rahva tegelikust elust või siis esindavad ümbritsevat keskkonda. See näitab nende suurt jõulisust, väljendusrikkust, mis toitub rahvuspärimustest. Mängude meloodiad on tavaliselt laialt levinud.

Rahva ajalugu, tema töö ja fauna peegeldub rahvuslikus folklooris. Neid žanre väljendab ühe rahvuskultuuri liigina mäng, mis aitab lähemalt tutvuda rahvuslike traditsioonidega, eesmärkidega, ühe või teise perioodi rõõmude ja muredega.

Folkloor on rahvusliku eripära säilitamise tähtsaks eeltingimuseks, see sisaldab rohkesti rahvuslikku kujutlusvõimet ja poeesiat.

Acta Universitatis Scientiarum Socialium et Artis Educandi Tallinnensis. 1998. A12: 112-117

Maie Vikat

THE ROLE OF FOLKLORIC MUSICAL-DIDACTIC PLAY IN A CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT

Annotation

The development of children's musical ability in traditional musical-didactic play was studied in an experiment lasting for 7 months. The experimental group consisted of 76 and the control group of 68 children aged 4-7. Singing ability, sense of musical rythm, musical memory and diction were used as indicators of musical development. In the experimental group the levels of musical rythm and diction improved three times and independent singing ability almost 1.5 times. These changes were not observed in the control group.

Compared to other kinds of play, a characteristic feature of didactic games is that they teach children and develop their abilities. The playing activity as such is the most important aspect of such games, for without it they would be nothing but didactic exercises. Through its artistic images music reflects childrens' surroundings and serves as a basis for fostering artistic-figurative perception. Perception of music is a complex process, through which the child learns to analyze the uniqueness of music as a form of art. They gain a grasp of musical forms of expression and learn to distinguish the individual character of a piece of music and of the different musical genres. Musical-didactic play includes sound combinations that express the contents of emotionally meaningful music. During a game it is also possible to pay attention to musical sound, rhythm, pitch, timbre and to the dynamic features of music. Even when considered separately, all these musical forms of expression are invaluable educational tools. Thus *rhythm* develops attention, concentration, reaction speed and precision. *Dynamics* and *timbre* sharpen up aural perception and the coordination of vocal and hearing apparatus. *Melody* opens up the world of feelings, and through feelings music conveys information.

All musical-didactic play has a purpose, which is the starting point in choosing a given game. Specifically, it is of utmost importance to select an appropriate level of difficulty because the tasks must be appropriate to the child's age. The child plays and learns at the same time. An integral part of musicaldidactic play are the rules of the game being played, which define the game and make it possible to influence children. By improving their attention children learn to respect other people and to communicate with them during the game. That is, the educational value of musical-

didactic play lies in its providing the child with an ability to apply acquired knowledge.

The different types of musical-didactic play are classified on the basis of the four features of musical sound: strength, duration, pitch and timbre. In this respect, types of play are differentiated as follows: 1) pitch-related listening, 2) perception of musical rhythm, 3) timbre and 4) games that develop dynamic listening (Vetlugina 1987).

An important aspect of musical-didactic play are singing games that develop the child's understanding of pitch relationships, sound durations, different kinds of music, tempo etc.

In the past, play was usually the main means of bringing up children. The older Estonian children's games were predominantly singing games, usually enlivened by humorous dialogues between the players. Play of this kind reflected an individual's immediate relation to the surrounding life, his or her authentic experiences, feelings and thoughts. Because of its creative features and emotionality, such play was important as a way of perceiving the surrounding world and as a versatile educational method. Thus, play has been and remains an integral part of Estonian culture. The playful atmosphere helps the child to acquire an imaginative grasp of their culture and understand their role in it.

By discovering the natural rhythms through folklore children find their own life rhythm and balance. From this internal rhythm develops an artistic, poetic and musical rhythm. Folk creation includes everything that the children need for their development. It is thus important that a modern child is able to freely and creatively participate in games that incorporate folklore elements – songs, rhymes, stories, proverbs, etc.

Our folklore legacy, whose volume (more than 300,000 items) is impressive even by international standards, includes a rich selection of children's songs, games, dances, etc, which offers rich opportunities for various musical-didactic forms of play.

In order to find out whether and how musical-didactic play gives the modern child access to our folklore, a reflection of the age-old world views and value judgements of our ancestors, and how that influences the child's level of musical development we conducted a study during the academic year 1995/96. The participants were 144 urban and rural kindergarten children aged 4-7, of which 76 formed an experimental group and 68 a control group. The study lasted seven months.

The children's musical abilities were determined in the beginning and end phases of the study through individual surveys based on the methods of the Estonian composer and music educationalist R. Päts (Päts 1989). Evaluation was grounded on the four main indicators of a child's musical development: singing ability, sense of musical rhythm, musical memory and diction. The children were scored on a 3-point scale. (Vikat 1996).

The folklore element dominated in the musical-didactic play (13 items) of the experimental group. The work in the control group proceeded traditionally.

The children's enthusiastic play suggested that they were naturally responsive to the imagery, humour, kindness and simplicity that is found in folklore.

The study produced results beyond our hopes. Surprisingly, the children were especially responsive to the simple, monotonous yet suggestive melody, the beautiful sound of the words and the rhythm of the folk song. The children obviously liked the recurring life wisdom, mystery, humour, gentleness and word-play. The ease and speed at which they acquired new knowledge and skills was remarkable. The different kinds of musical-didactic play invoked the children's creative resources in a simple and direct way. It could be observed that the word-play found in folklore develops ingenuity and sense of humour by encouraging risktaking while allowing mistakes to be made. The children's fascination was persuasively confirmed by *their immediate application* of their newly acquired knowledge in their free play and everyday activities. The leading figures in our study were the group teacher along with the kindergarten music teacher.

An analysis of the experimental data (see Figure 1) shows that during the study's beginning phase a fairly consistent low level of musical development dominated in both groups. The developmental level of the control group children was by some indicators, such as their sense of musical rhythm and singing ability, actually higher than in the experimental group.

EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

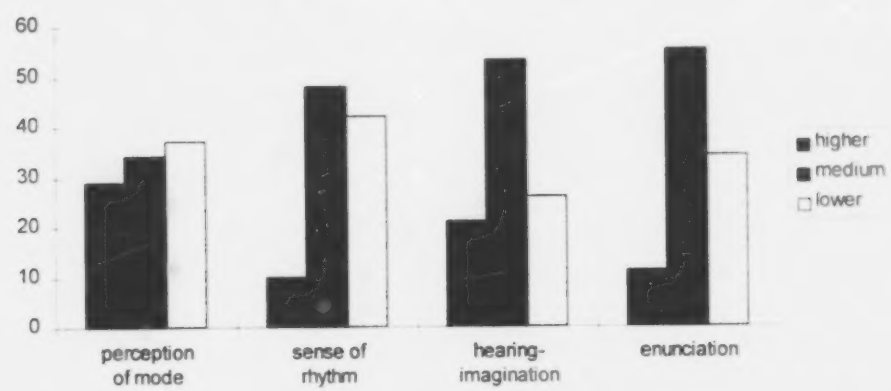

Figure 1. Children's level of musical development at the initial stage of the experiment

CHECK GROUP

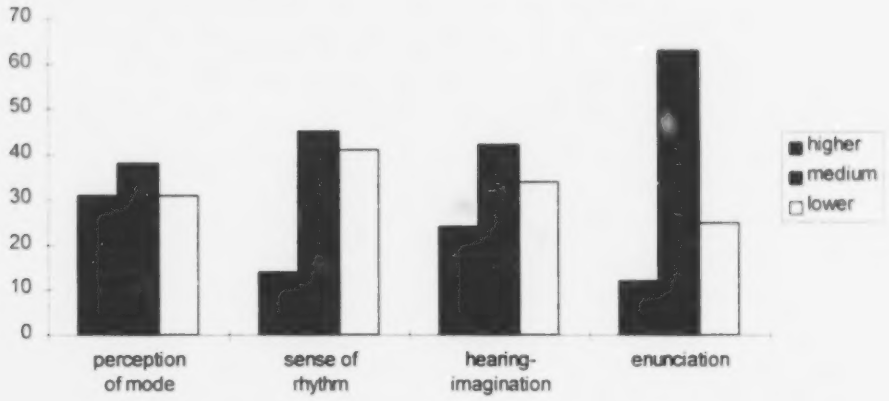

Figure 2. Children's level of musical development at the initial stage of the experiment

The data from the end phase, however, show an entirely different level of development, with the experimental group making substantially better progress than the control group (see Figure 3; 4).

EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

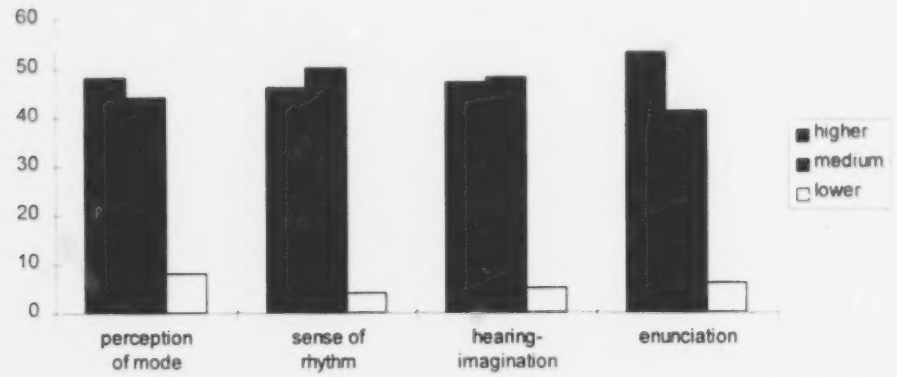

Figure 3. Children's level of musical development at the final stage of the experiment

CHECK GROUP

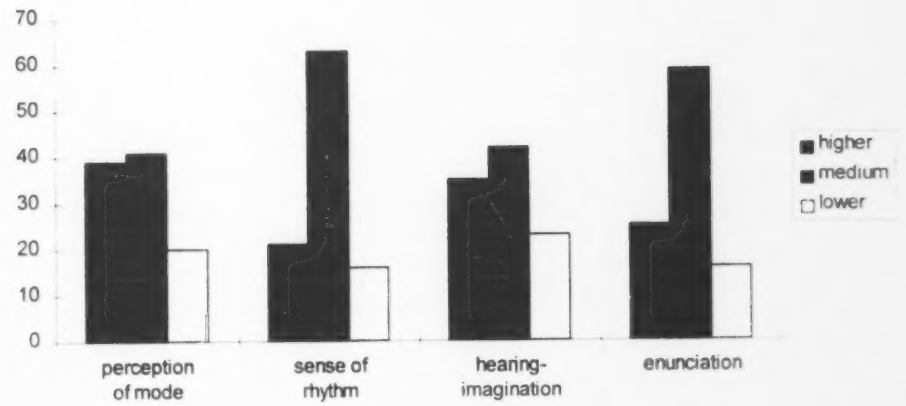

Figure 4. Children's level of musical development at the final stage of the experiment

Thus, the children's sense of musical rhythm and their diction improved almost by a factor of three. The improvement in the childrens' clarity of diction, skill in using sound tones and emotional expressiveness was particularly remarkable. Such advances can be explained by their interest in the humorous texts based on word-play that may be interpreted in several ways.

The development of the children's independent singing ability – the most important indicator of a child's musical development – deserves particular attention. In the experimental group the children's independent singing ability was enhanced almost by a factor of 1.5, while among the children in the control group no such progress could be observed. The differences between the children in the experimental group and in the control group were statistically significant ($p > 95\%$).

CONCLUSION

Particularly in the pre-school age when children's perception is especially wide, it is necessary to pay more attention to selecting folklore material for didactic purposes. It could become the starting point of pre-school education. The child is capable of same kinds of accomplishment as adults. To influence children we must expose them to materials of a type that fascinate them and lend themselves to pedagogic uses. That will bring out children's abilities and accelerate their development.

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FOLKLOORNE MUUSIKALIS-DIDAKTILINE MÄNG LAPSE ARENGUS

Resümee

Muusika peegeldab kunstilistes kujundites lapsi ümbritsevat elu ja on muusikakasvatuses kunstilis-kujundliku tunnetuse aluseks. Eriline koht muusikakasvatuses on muusikalis-didaktilistel mängudel, mis arendavad laste sensoorseid võimeid, s.o oskust tajuda ja reprodutseerida muusikalise heli kõrgust, vältust, tämbrit ja nende kõige lihtsamaid seoseid. Muusikalis-didaktiliste mängude käigus leiavad käsitlemist helikombinatsioonid, mis väljendavad emotsionaalselt mõtestatud heliteose sisu, või arutletakse muusikalise heli omaduste üle.

Muusika tajumine on keeruline protsess, mistõttu on vaja last õpetada analüüsima muusika kui kunstiliigi eripära, teadlikult juhtida tema tähelepanu muusikalistele väljendusvahenditele (rütm, tempo, dünaamika jt), muusikateoste eristamisele nende iseloomu ja žanride järgi. Nii on eesmärgipärane kasutada mitmesuguseid muusikalis-didaktilisi mänge, mis avaldavad lapsele komplekssset mõju, ergutavad tema audiovisuaalset ja liikumisaktiivsust, laiendades sellega muusika tajumist tervikuna.

Muusikalis-didaktiliste mängude peamine eesmärk on laste muusikaliste võimete arendamine. Jõukohases mängulises tegevuses areneb rütmitunne, tämbriline ja dünaamiline kuulmine, kinnistuvad muusikalised teadmised ja oskused.

Muusikalis-didaktiliste mängude klassifitseerimise aluseks on võetud muusikalise heli 4 omadust: tugevus, vältus, kõrgus ja tämber. Sellest lähtuvalt eristatakse mänge järgnevalt:

1) helikõrguslikku kuulmist, 2) muusikalist rütmitunnet, 3) helitämbrit ja 4) dünaamilist kuulmist arendavad mängud.

Siit lähtuvalt, eesti folkloorile tugineva materjali põhjal läbiviidud katse tulemused kinnituvad laste muusikaliste võimete intensiivset arengut, tähelepanu-, mõtlemis- ja kujutlusvõime aktiviseerumist, ühendades endas kõik muusikalise tegevuse liigid.

V PLAY AND TOYS

Acta Universitatis Sientiarum Socialium et Artis Educandi Tallinnensis. 1998. A12: 121-134

James F. Christie

TOYS AND EARLY LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

Annotation

This paper examines educational literacy toys, such as alphabet blocks and letter puzzles, in light of current knowledge about early reading and writing development. Three limitations of these educational toys are discussed: (a) children often ignore the literacy content of these playthings and use them for other purposes; (b) these toys focus on the structure of print and emphasize use of conventional forms; and (c) these toys are designed for solitary practice. Functional literacy props – playthings that encourage children to incorporate everyday uses of reading and writing into their dramatic play – are proposed as a promising alternative to educational literacy toys.

The idea that toys and playthings can be educational is not a new one. In his book, "Toys as Culture", Brian Sutton-Smith (1986) traces the connection between toys and learning back to the 1600s when English philosopher John Locke designed a set of letter blocks that could be used to help to teach children the alphabet. From that point forward, the linkage between toys and learning continued to flourish, aided by the claims of toy manufacturers and support from renowned educators such as Frederich Froebel and Maria Montessori. The end result, according to Sutton-Smith, was "a fundamental modern cultural belief that play and, to a lesser extent, educational playthings and toys are a fundamental part of a child's growth" (1986:124).

This paper examines one group of these so-called "educational toys" (Almqvist 1994b) – those that are designed to help children learn to read and write. Alphabet blocks and other educational literacy toys are examined in light of current knowledge about early reading and writing development. This new knowledge, embodied in the "emergent literacy" perspective (Sulzby, Teale 1991), raises several concerns about the appropriateness of educational literacy toys and the skills that they attempt to teach. Functional literacy props – playthings that encourage children to incorporate everyday uses of reading and writing into their dramatic play – are proposed as a promising alternative to educational literacy toys.

EDUCATIONAL LITERACY TOYS

Educational toys are designed to promote the learning of specific concepts and skills. The widespread use of these didactic toys has been documented by Almqvist's

(1994a) extensive survey of 340 Swedish child-care institutions. She found that educational toys were the dominant types of play materials in these preschools and day-care centers, outnumbering toys designed to elicit role-playing and make-believe. Almqvist cites similar findings in a study of French schools by Gilles Brougère.

I was unable to locate a comprehensive survey of the types of play materials used in American preschools and kindergartens. Based on visits to many classrooms, I would predict that educational toys outnumber pretend play props in most American preschools. This hunch is backed up by an examination of the 1995-1996 edition of the Constructive Playthings catalog, a leading play material supplier. More than 80 pages were devoted to educational toys categorized by academic subject compared with 15 pages of make-believe play materials.

Toys designed to promote literacy learning typically focus on skills such as letter recognition, phonics (letter-sound relationships), and spelling. The Constructive Playthings catalog, for example, contained alphabet blocks, alphabet puzzles, magnetic letters, wooden letters, alphabet games, alphabet/phonics blocks (with letters and pictures of objects starting with the letter sounds), and spelling games. These toys are designed to provide opportunities for enjoyable practice of literacy-related skills. For example, it is hoped that children will notice the letters on alphabet blocks and will eventually practice saying the names of letters as they play with the blocks. Such toys also provide opportunities for informal adult tutoring. A parent might point to the letters on alphabet blocks and say their names, or the parent might ask a child to identify letters on the blocks.

How effective are these toys in promoting literacy growth? As is documented in Almqvist's (1994a) extensive review of toy research, there is scant experimental evidence that didactic play materials actually live up to their manufacturers' claims and promote learning. This topic simply has not been the focus of carefully designed research, and the few findings that are available are inconclusive.

I would predict that, if well-designed longitudinal studies were conducted, the results would indicate that educational literacy toys have little impact on children literacy development. I base this prediction on three limitations of these educational toys – one related to the nature of play itself and the other two dealing with current knowledge about early literacy development.

One of the defining qualities of play is its assimilative, nonliteral nature (Neumann 1972; Piaget 1962; Rubin, Fein, Vandenberg 1983; Smith, Vollstedt 1985). When playing, children tend to ignore external reality and impose their own meanings on objects, actions, and situations. As a result, children are the ones who ultimately decide if a plaything is to be used as an educational object or as a whimsical toy (Vandenberg 1987).

Children do sometimes use educational toys as intended by the manufacturer. In a recent study on collaborative literacy play (Stone, Christie 1996a), Sandra Stone and I observed an incident involving an "alphabet ice tray." This plaything was an unusual

hybrid: part dramatic play prop and part didactic toy. It contained 26 cube molds, each with a raised letter of the alphabet at the bottom. Two kindergarten girls were in a home center, pretending to cook dinner. One girl picked up the ice tray and shook it over a pan. She said, "I'm going to make alphabet soup." She then proceeded to read some of the letters on the ice tray. The girl used the toy in a pedagogical manner, practicing her alphabet recognition.

Children also use educational toys in nonprototypical ways. As a child, I remember using alphabet blocks to build forts and other structures. I did this out of necessity because I did not have enough regular "unit" blocks to complete my constructions. I noticed the letters on the sides but did not pay much attention to them other than to wish that they were not there. I always put these blocks on the backside of structures so as not to spoil the appearance of my constructions!

Alphabet blocks are also frequently used as props in dramatic play and are subjected to a variety of make-believe transformations. During several of my studies on dramatic play (Christie 1983; Christie, Enz 1992; Christie, Johnsen 1989), I have observed alphabet blocks being used as if they were money, various types of food, telephones, and bombs (a transformation that was quickly terminated by the child's teacher). Thus, the first limitation of educational literacy toys is that children often use them in noninstructional ways.

The other two limitations concern the theory upon which these toys are based. Toys such as alphabet blocks and phonics games are based on a "subskill" theory of literacy acquisition. This theory maintains that reading consists of a linear succession of subskills that must be learned one after another: letter recognition, letter-sound relationships (phonics), sight words, other decoding skills (context, word structure), and finally comprehension (Paris, Wasik, Turner 1991:624). The assumption is made that, once all these skills are mastered, students will be good readers.

Some subskills are considered to be prerequisite or "readiness" skills that must be mastered before reading and writing can take place. For example, children must be able to recognize the letters of the alphabet and learn the sounds associated with these letters before they can recognize printed words. Similarly, children must learn handwriting, spelling, and grammar skills before they can begin to write meaningful sentences. Once these readiness skills are learned through tutoring and practice, children will be able to begin reading and writing in a conventional, accurate manner. These readiness subskills are the focus of most educational literacy toys.

In recent years, this "subskill" theory has been challenged by a growing body of research on emergent literacy (McGee, Richgels 1996; Sulzby, Teale 1991). According to this new theory, children acquire literacy by engaging in meaningful reading and writing activities rather than by learning a linear sequence of skills through drill and practice.

The emergent literacy perspective maintains that written language is acquired in much the same way as oral language. Literacy learning begins very early and occurs in the

context of everyday social activities. Infants and toddlers observe the literacy that surrounds them in everyday life – bedtime stories, environmental print (labels on cereal boxes, restaurant signs) and family literacy routines (looking up programs in the TV Guide, writing down phone messages, making shopping lists). Based on these observations, young children begin to construct their own hypotheses about reading and writing. They first figure out what print does and why it is important. Then, they focus on the form and structure of print, inventing their own "emergent" versions of written language. These emergent forms of literacy initially have little resemblance to conventional forms – the story a child "reads" may be completely different than the one in the book and scribbles are often used to represent writing. As children have opportunities to use emergent forms of literacy in meaningful social situations, these emergent versions of literacy become increasingly similar to conventional reading and writing.

In contrast with the subskill theory, emergent literacy research maintains that there are no prerequisite skills that must be mastered before children can begin engaging in emergent forms of reading and writing. Young children can often read whole words in environmental print (the word "Pepsi" on a soft drink can) before they can identify any letters of the alphabet (Goodman 1986). They write meaningful messages using personalized script long before they have mastered the mechanics of handwriting or the conventions of spelling (Sulzby 1985).

The emergent literacy perspective raises two additional concerns about educational literacy toys: one having to do with the skills that the toys attempt to teach, and the other dealing with how these skills are learned.

Emergent literacy has shown that children first need to learn that print is important and has many practical, worthwhile functions. Only then do children begin to pay attention to print and learn about its structure and conventions (Mason 1980; Lomax, McGee 1987). As Morrow (1993:115) explains, children acquire literacy skills "when they see a purpose and need for the process".

Educational toys focus on graphic and phonemic properties of print rather than on the functional uses of written language. Metaphorically speaking, these toys may be putting "the cart before the horse," attempting to focus young children's attention on aspects of print that they are not developmentally ready to process. Before children can benefit from toys that emphasize the graphic and phonemic properties of print, they first must learn more basic concepts about what print does and why it is important. Only then will the literacy aspects of educational toys become salient to children.

The other limitation is that these toys assume that literacy skills are best learned through solitary practice. As Sutton-Smith (1986: 28) points out, toys have long been used to promote solitary play and learning:

The modern physical approach to the baby is to isolate it as much as possible from the ongoing events of family life, and yet contradictorily stimulate it as much as

possible in order to increase its intellectual responsiveness. In this way, the general desire for solitariness is united with the desire for achievement, which is thought to require continual and intensive intellectual stimulation. The first requires the baby to be left alone often; the second requires the baby to be subjected to a great variety of stimulation. The compromise is to have, as much as possible, the stimulation carried out by physical devices [i.e., toys] that do not require the participation of another person.

Toys like alphabet blocks and puzzles are ideally suited for this purpose. Children can play with these toys by themselves and, at the same time, receive literacy information and practice.

In contrast, emergent literacy research suggests that children best learn about reading and writing through social interaction. In social situations, adults and more capable peers can provide scaffolding that enables children to engage in literacy activities that they could not do on their own (Vygotsky 1978). Opportunities for collaborative learning also arise. When children engage in literacy activities together, they can help each other to learn about literacy (Neuman, Roskos 199; Stone, Christie 1996b). From this perspective, the solitary practice encouraged by educational toys is not an ideal context for literacy learning.

FUNCTIONAL LITERACY PROPS

The emergent literacy perspective suggests that children's initial play with reading and writing should be social in nature and focus on the everyday functions of print. A growing strand of research has identified a type of plaything that meets these specifications: functional literacy props (Christie, 1994). These are theme-related props that encourage children to incorporate everyday literacy activities into their dramatic play. The goal is to create play settings that resemble the literacy environments that young children encounter at home and in their communities. These props invite children to use familiar literacy routines and activities in their dramatizations.

Dramatic play occurs when children take on roles and act out make-believe stories and situations. Traditionally, this type of play has been encouraged by providing children with sets of props that are related to a theme. For example, home-related dramatizations can be encouraged with miniature kitchen furniture and appliances, dishes, phone, ironing board, cradle, and dolls. Doctor play can be promoted by a white gown and a kit containing miniature replicas of a stethoscope, syringes, and other materials used by physicians.

Until recently, literacy materials have been intentionally excluded from dramatic play settings, based on the belief that mixing literacy with play would confuse children and impede their development (Roskos, Vukelich, Christie, Enz, Neuman 1995). However, with the growing acceptance of emergent literacy theory, it became clear

that linking literacy with play would enhance literacy acquisition rather than impede it (Christie 199; Hall 1987).

Functional literacy props for housekeeping play include the types of reading and writing materials that children would encounter at home: pens, markers, note pads, cook books, phone directory, recipe cards, message boards, empty product containers (e.g., cereal boxes), magazines and newspapers. A doctor play setting could be stocked with pens, prescription pads, patient charts, an appointment books, wall signs ("Payment due at time of service"), and magazines for waiting patients to read. Table 1 presents sets of functional literacy props for use with other themes including restaurant, grocery store, airport, post office, veterinarian, and business office.

Table 1.

Functional Literacy Props (Source: Christie 1994)

Home Center
Pencils, pens, markers
Note pads
Post It notes
Baby sitter instruction forms
Typewriter
Telephone message pads
Message board
Children's books, magazines, newspapers
Cookbooks, recipe box
Product containers (cereal boxes, etc.)

Business Office
Pencils, pens, markers
Note pads
Telephone message forms
Calendar
Wall signs ("Open/Closed")
Stationery, envelopes
File folders
Order forms

Restaurant
Pencils
Note pads
Menus
Wall signs ("Deli")
Bank checks
Cookbooks
Product containers

Post Office
Pencils, pens, markers
Stationery and evelopes
Stamps
Mailboxes
Address labels
Wall signs ("Line Starts Here")

Grocery Store
Pencils, pens, markers
Note pads
Bank checks

Veterinarian's Office
Pencils, pens, markers
Appointment books
Wall signs ("Waiting Room")

Wall signs ("Supermarket")
Shelf labels for store areas ("Meat")
Product containers

Labels with pet's names
Patient charts
Prescription forms
Magazines (in waiting room)

Airport/Airplane

Pencils, pens, markers
Tickets
Maps
Luggage tags
Magazines (on board plane)
Air sickness bags with printed instructions

Library

Pencils
Books
Shelf labels for books ("Animals")
Library cards
Wall signs ("Quiet")
Check-out cards for books

The following vignette, recorded in a university preschool classroom as part of a study on teacher play interaction styles (Enz, Christie 1994), illustrates how functional literacy props can encourage children to incorporate reading and writing into their dramatic play:

Several 4-year-olds have agreed to take a make-believe train trip to France. They decide to use an elevated loft in the classroom as their train and begin moving chairs up the stairs to use as passenger seats. The teacher helps several children make signs to place on the side of the train. These signs prohibit smoking, drugs, and ghosts – activities and objects that the children do not want on their train. Two boys go to an adjacent center and begin making tickets for the journey, cutting out small pieces of paper. One boy covers his "tickets" with scribble writing, and the other writes the letter t on each ticket. He says to his friend, "T for ticket." Once the tickets are made, the boys distribute them to all the other children. These tickets are collected by the engineer as the passengers enter the train. While the children wait for their teacher to finish packing his bag and join them on board the train, they lean over the loft railing and attempt to read signs on the side of the train including "no smoking," "no drugs," and "no ghosts." They have difficulty reading the prohibition against drugs and ask the teacher, "What's that say?" The teacher reads the sign out loud for the children and then climbs on board so that the journey can begin. Several times during the trip, the engineer consults a map to find the way to France.

This vignette illustrates several ways in which functional literacy props can promote literacy learning. First, the props allowed the children to demonstrate their emerging conceptions about the functional uses of print (Neuman, Roskos 1989; Schrader 1989). They knew that print communicates meaning (evident in the question, "What's that say?") and that it could be used to control behavior (e.g., prohibit smoking) and grant access to goods and services via tickets. Second, the make-believe nature of the play provided an ideal context for experimenting with emergent forms of literacy

(Christie 1995). It was perfectly acceptable to use scribble writing or invented spelling (*t* for *ticket*) to produce the tickets, and all of the players treated the pretend tickets as if they were real. Thus, play's fantasy component invited risk taking and added meaning and significance to children's emergent writing. Third, the functional literacy props provided an opportunity for literacy-related social interactions with peers and an adult (Neuman, Roskos 1991; Roskos, Neuman 1993). For example, the children worked together to figure out the meaning of the train signs and also sought help from the teacher on the one sign they could not decipher on their own. In this instance, the teacher created what Vygotsky (1978) called a "zone of proximal development," allowing children to engage in a literacy activity (sign reading) that they could not do on their own. Opportunities for collaborative learning also arose. Several children watched the engineer read the map, and they asked him what it was. He explained that it was a map and that he was using it to find France, helping his peers learn another functional use of literacy.

A growing body of research has documented the positive impact of functional literacy props on children's play and literacy. **Quantitative** studies conducted in preschool and kindergarten classrooms have clearly established that literacy props result in increased amounts of reading and writing activity during play (Christie, Enz 1992; Morrow, Rand 1991; Neuman, Roskos 1992; Vukelich 1991). These gains tend to be quite large. For example, Neuman and Roskos (1992) reported that the average number of literacy handling behaviors per play session increased from 1.7 to 7.3 for the literacy prop treatment, versus an increase from 1.4 to 1.5 for the control group.

Functional literacy props have also been found to enhance the quality of children's dramatic play. Detailed analyses of videotaped play sessions in the Neuman and Roskos (1992) study revealed that literacy prop group's literacy play sequences were 10 times longer and much more complex than those of the control group. These effects were maintained over the entire 7 months of the study, indicating that novelty of the literacy props was not a factor.

Qualitative studies, with their detailed focus on individual children's play and literacy behaviors, have produced rich descriptions of the play that occurs when functional literacy props are introduced into preschool, kindergarten, and primary-grade play settings (Neuman, Roskos 1989, 1991; Roskos, Neuman 1993; Schrader 1989, 1990). These studies have also shed light on some of the mechanisms through which literacy props can facilitate children's literacy development: (a) independent exploration and practice with print materials, (b) opportunities to use literacy for functional purposes, (c) collaborative learning with peers, and (d) teacher scaffolding.

In summary, functional literacy props are ideally suited for young children who are just beginning to learn about reading and writing. These playthings enable children to explore the practical functions of literacy that they observe in everyday life. They can demonstrate and expand their understanding of how print can be used "to get

things done" in the real world. These props also encourage children to experiment with emergent forms of reading and writing in a safe, low-risk environment. In addition, literacy props provide opportunities for children to learn about literacy through interaction with peers and adults.

CONCLUSION

This paper has highlighted three limitations of educational literacy toys: (a) children often ignore the literacy content of these playthings and use them for other purposes; (b) these toys focus on the structure of print and emphasize use of conventional forms; and (c) these toys are designed for solitary practice. In contrast, functional literacy props encourage children to focus on the functions of print and to experiment with emergent forms of reading and writing in social situations. From the standpoint of initial literacy development, therefore, functional literacy props are the playthings of choice for preschool-age children.

It is important to note, however, that none of the limitations pertaining to educational literacy toys are particularly serious. To a certain extent, the first limitation dealing with play's assimilative nature moderates the effects of the other two. The fact that educational literacy toys focus on the structure of print can present a problem for children who are not ready to focus on this aspect of written language. However, these children can simply ignore the literacy content of these toys and use them in a nonprototypical manner. For example, they can build forts with alphabet blocks, or use these blocks as make-believe food in connections with a housekeeping dramatization. Once these children learn about the functional significance of play, then the literacy content of these toys will become more salient and offer opportunities for practicing more advanced literacy skills.

The assimilative nature of play also makes it possible for children to ignore the fact that educational toys have been designed to promote solitary practice. They can simply choose to use these toys in a collaborative fashion. On several occasions, I have witnessed pairs of children taking turns recognizing the letters on alphabet blocks.

I recommend that both types of playthings – educational toys and functional literacy props – be made available for young children. The functional literacy props will build fundamental concepts about the meaning and significance of print that will, in turn, make the literacy content of educational toys more salient to children. These same fundamental concepts also supply motivation for attending to the structural aspects of print (Teale 1986). Once children realize that print is important, they have a reason to pay attention to it. Until children have reached this stage, they will likely use educational literacy toys in nonliteral, playful ways.

Functional literacy props have been the topic of an extensive amount of research in recent years. Educational literacy toys, on the other hand, have been largely neglected. Carefully controlled experimental studies are needed to determine if these didactic

toys really promote literacy learning as claimed by their manufacturers. Research is also needed to explore how these educational toys are used by children at different levels of literacy development and in different settings. Studies could also be conducted to compare the use of the educational toys with that of functional literacy props. If both types of play materials are available, which do children prefer to play with? Is this choice of play material affected by children's age or level of literacy development?

Toy manufacturers should give more attention to functional literacy props. An abundance of educational literacy toys are available, but literacy props are conspicuously absent from most dramatic play sets. This could be easily remedied. Doctor kits, for example, could contain pencils, blank prescription forms, patient folders, wall signs, and an appointment book. Housekeeping furniture set could include phone message pads, child cookbooks, pretend bank checks, message boards, and other domestic literacy materials. These props would certainly appeal to education-conscious parents. In addition, they would extend the range of children's play options and offer valuable opportunities for them to learn about the practical functions of print.

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MÄNGUASJAD JA VARANE KIRJAOSKUSE ARENG

Resümee

Mõte, et mänguasjad võivad olla harivad, ei ole uus. Oma raamatus Toys as Culture (Mänguasjad kui kultuur) jälgib Brian Sutton-Smith (1986) mänguasjade ja õppimise seotust alates 17. sajandist, mil inglise filosoof John Locke valmistas komplekti täheklotse, mille abil lastele tähti sai õpetada. Kui efektiivselt aitavad sellised didaktilised mänguasjad kaasa kirjaoskuse kasvule? Nagu on märgitud Almquisti (1994) ulatuslikus ülevaates mänguasjade-alasest teaduslikust uurimistööst, on olemas napp eksperimentaalne tõestus, et didaktilised mänguvahendid tegelikkuses nende tootjate nõuded ellu viivad ja õppimisele kaasa aitavad. Sellel teemal ei ole tehtud hoolikalt planeeritud teaduslikku uurimistööd ja üksikud kättesaadavad uurimistulemused on ebaveenvad.

Seoses selle puudujäägiga empiirilises uurimistöös otsustasin ma vaadelda didaktilisi mänguasju kirjaoskuse arengu tänapäeva seisukohti silmas pidades (Sulzby ja Teale 1991). Ilmnesid kahte liiki piirangud: ühed, mis on seotud oskustega, mida sellised mänguasjad õpetada püüavad, ja teised seonduvad sellega, kuidas neid oskusi omandatakse.

Õpetavad mänguasjad keskenduvad pigem trükikirja foneemilistele omadustele kui kirjakeele funktsionaalsele kasutamisele. Metafooriliselt väljendudes rakendavad nad vankri hobuse ette, üritades keskendada väikelapse tähelepanu trükikirja omadustele, mida nad oma arenguastmele vastavalt on võimelised vastu võtma. Enne kui lapsed hakkavad kasu saama mänguasjadest, mis rõhutavad trükikirja graafilisi ja foneemilisi omadusi, peavad nad omandama põhilised seisukohad selle kohta, mida trükikirja abil väljendatakse ja milleks see oluline on. Alles seejärel tulevad hariduslike mänguasjade kirjaoskust kujundavad omadused laste jaoks esile.

Teiseks on kirjaoskust kujundavad metoodilised mänguasjad mõeldud üksi kasutamiseks (vaata Sutton-Smith 1986 arutelu "Mänguasjade üksilduse" üle). Viimase aja kirjaoskuse uurimused näitavad aga vastupidist, et lapsed õpivad lugemise ja kirjutamise kohta kõige enam sotsiaalse interaktsiooni kaudu.

Kirjaoskuse kujundamise esmaste mänguasjadena tuleks kõne alla teist tüüpi mängumaterjal: funktsionaalsed kirjaoskust kujundavad rekvisiidid. Need on temaatilised rekvisiidid, mis soodustavad, et lapsed kirjaoskuse kujundamise elemente oma igapäevastesse põnevatesse mängudesse lülitaksid. Näiteks võiks arstimängu komplekt sisaldada pliiatseid, retseptiraamatuid, patsientide haiguslugude kaarte, registreerimisraamatuid, seinasilte (Teenuste eest tasuda kohapeal) ja ajakirju, mida ootesaalis istuvad patsiendid lugeda saaksid.

Ulatuslik uurimistöö on näidanud, et kirjaoskust arendavad rekvisiitid mõjutavad positiivselt laste mänge ja kirjaoskust (nt Neuman & Roskos, 1991, 1992; Roskos & Neuman, 1993). Sellised mänguvahendid annavad lastele võimaluse uurida kirjaoskuse praktilisi funktsioone, milleks igapäevaelu võimalusi pakub. Funktsionaalsed kirjaoskust arendavad vahendid julgustavad lapsi eksperimenteerima lugemise ja kirjutamise nähtavate vormidega ohutus, madala riskifaktoriga keskkonnas. Lisaks annavad sellised vahendid lastele võimaluse õppida kirjaoskust eakaaslaste ja täiskasvanutega suheldes.

Soovitan, et väikelastele oleksid kättesaadavad mõlemat tüüpi mänguasjad – nii didaktilised kui ka funktsionaalsed kirjaoskust edendavad vahendid. Funktsionaalsed kirjaoskust edendavad vahendid rajavad põhilise arusaamise trükikirja tähendusest ja tähtsusest, mis omakorda muudab õpetavate mänguasjade kirjaoskust kujundava sisu laste jaoks paremini omandatavaks. Kui lapsed mõistavad, et trükikiri on oluline nähtus, on neil põhjust sellele ka tähelepanu pöörata.

Acta Universitatis Scientiarum Socialium et Artis Educandi Tallinnensis. 1998. A12: 135-142

Soili Keskinen, Anu Leppiman

CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY OF ESTONIAN AND FINNISH CHILDREN'S TOY PREFERENCES

Annotation

The question how much girls and boys have masculine and feminine preferences in choosing toys was answered in this cross-cultural study. Estonian and Finnish children's toy choices were compared. Thirty Estonian and Finnish girls and boys (mean age 4.5 years) were individually interviewed in day care centres. Children were shown black and white drawings of six male-typical, six female-typical and eight neutral toys and asked how much they preferred each toy. There were only few differences between the cultures in masculine and feminine toy preferences, but there was a clear difference between the sexes.

Gender is one of the first distinctions that children make in classifying others, things, toys and activities. Stereotyping of toys has been shown in children as young as 2 years of age and by 3 to 4 years of age, most children can apply sex-stereotypic labels to common toys, activities and household tasks (Turner, Gervai 1995). Boys appeared to develop sex-typed interest in toys at an earlier age than girls (Robinson, Morris 1986). Boys are more stereotyped in their play style preferences than the girls are according to cross-cultural study of Alexander and Hines (1994). Greater social pressures for sex-appropriate play for boys than for girls could contribute to this gender difference.

It has been hypothetized that sex-typed preferences are associated with the development of gender constancy, but Smetana and Letourneau (1984) could not find any connections between gender constancy and sex-typed toy preferences.

Gender role socialization and development are shaped by multiple agents in a variety of settings: by parents, teachers, and peers at home, in day care and at free play. Parents provide different toys for their daughters and sons starting at an early age (Etaugh, Liss 1992). Parents began to react more favorably to gender-typical play during the second year of their child, affecting the child's activities and toy choices (Beal 1994). Culture has an important influence on children's social behavior and their expression of play activities. Parent-child play reflects scripts culturally valued. (Farver, Kim, Lee 1995)

A consistent finding in the developmental literature is that children prefer toys traditionally stereotyped for their own sex more than toys for the other sex (Martin,

Eisenbud, Rose 1995). Many studies have shown that young children's preferences for traditional gender-stereotyped toys have remained quite stable over the past 50 years (Robinson, Morris 1986). Observations of 3 to 4-year-olds in homes, nursery schools and playgroups have shown that boys play more with machines, balls and military toys, where girls play more in art activities and with dolls, domestic items and dressing up (Huston 1983, cit. Turner, Gervai 1995). According many studies preschool boys spend more time playing in outdoor settings and participate in more active play than preschool girls, while girls tend to play indoors more frequently and play in more static types of play than boys (Levy 1994). Many studies have shown that preschool-aged boys and girls play with different types of toys. These studies show for instance that boys are given a larger variety of toys with which to play and girls are given toys which help them to practice in domestic activities or in mothering. Also boys are given toys which encourage them to explor, to manipulate, to construct and to provide feedback more frequently than girls (Miller 1987).

Findings consistent across many observational studies, including cross-cultural ones, are that boys tend to show more aggressive behavior than girls and engage more frequently in rough-and-tumble play encompassing behaviors such as play fighting, wrestling and tumbling. Girls tend to be more empathic, more compliant compared with boys (Turner, Gervai 1995).

Results of many studies have demonstrated that during the preschool years, children exhibit definite preferences for same sex-role stereotyped toys and activities, and tend to reject cross-sex stereotyped toys and activities. Children prefer also same-sex playmates at a very young age (2 - 3 age) and in many cultures (cit. Alexander, Hines 1994). With age, children continue to exhibit preference for same-sex activities, although girls begin to show increasing interest in cross-sex activities, while boys maintain or even increase their preference for masculine activities. (Moller, Hymel, Rubin 1992) In Carter's and Levy's (1986) study preschool-aged boys' toy preferences were more stereotype consistent than girls' toy prefences. According to Etaugh, Liss (1992) girls preferred masculine toys and activities more than boys preferred feminine ones. With increasing age, from kindergarten to the eighth grade at school, both girls and boys increasingly preferred masculine toys and male friends.

The purpose of this cross-cultural study was to investigate how much girls and boys have masculine and feminine preferences when choosing toys. We had also the possibility to compare Estonian and Finnish children in their toy choices.

METHOD

We interviewed 30 Finnish boys and 30 Finnish girls. In Estonia we interviewed also 30 girls and 28 boys. All children were interviewed individually in day care centers. The mean age of children was 4.5 years.

Children were shown black-and-white drawings of six male-typical, six female-typical and eight neutral toys one by one in a fixed order and were asked to say how much they prefer each toy: a lot, a little or not at all (Spence, Helmreich 1978) (Appendix).

Gender typing was measured on two summary scales:

1. preferences of masculine toys summed up all six male-typical toys' points,
2. preferences of feminine toys summed up all six female-typed toys' points.

RESULTS

First we compared Estonian and Finnish boys' and girls' favorite toys (Table 1).

Table 1.

Most popular toys

ESTONIAN GIRLS		ESTONIAN BOYS	
1. DOLL'S HOUSE	(F)	1. MICKY MOUSE	(N)
2. DOLL'S CLOTHES	(F)	2. EXCAVATOR	(M)
3. BAKING TOOLS	(F)	3. WOOD TOOLS	(M)
MICKY MOUSE	(N)	CAR AND GASOLIN-STATION	(M)
		FOOTBALL	(M)
FINNISH GIRLS		**FINNISH BOYS**	
1. XYLOPHONE	(N)	1. GUN	(M)
2. DOLL'S CLOTHES	(F)	2. WOOD TOOLS	(M)
DOMESTIC ANIMALS	(N)	MICKY MOUSE	(N)
3. DOLL'S HOUSE	(F)	3. SOLDIER DOLL	(M)
TEA CUPS	(F)		
DRUM	(N)		

The most popular toys for Estonian girls were doll's house, doll's clothes, baking things and Micky Mouse. Estonian girls' choices were very traditional, female-typed. Estonian boys selected as most popular toys Micky Mouse, excavator, car and

gasolin station, wood tools and football. Also Estonian boys' choices were traditional, male-typed, except for Micky Mouse.

Finnish girls selected as their most popular toys the xylophone, doll's clothes, domestic animals, doll's house, tea cups and the drum. From the six most popular toys there were three neutral toys, the others were female-typed. Finnish boys selected the gun, wood tools, Micky Mouse and soldier doll. Finnish boys' most preferred toys were male-typed, except for Micky Mouse, and aggressive, because both the gun and the soldier doll were selected by boys as toys they liked very much.

Then we compared Estonian and Finnish boys and girls in their masculinity (Table 2), femininity (Table 3) and neutral scores (Table 4) measured by summary points.

Table 2.

Masculine toy preferences of Estonian and Finnish children

	Estonian		**Finnish**		
	Boys 28		Boys 30		
	Girls 30		Girls 30		
	M	**SD**	**M**	**SD**	
Boys	10.0	1.5	10.4	1.8	p=0.3311 n.s.
Girls	4.4	2.6	8.0	3.4	p=0.0001 ***
	p=0.0001 ***		p=0.0012**		

Table 3.

Feminine toy preferences of Estonian and Finnish children

	Estonian		**Finnish**		
	Boys 28		Boys 30		
	Girls 30		Girls 30		
	M	**SD**	**M**	**SD**	
Boys	10.0	1.5	10.4	1.8	p=0.3311 n.s.
Girls	4.4	2.6	8.0	3.4	p=0.0001 ***
	p=0.0001 ***		p=0.0012**		

Finnish girls' masculinity points were stronger than Estonian girls' points, but in femininity points Estonian and Finnish girls were equal. When we look at the results from boys' points in masculinity and femininity, Estonian and Finnish boys were in the same level in their masculinity points, but Finnish boys liked a little bit more female-typed toys than Estonian boys.

In summing up, there were only few differences between cultures in masculine and feminine toy preferences. The strongest difference was between Estonian and Finnish girls' masculinity, Finnish girls preferring stronger male-typed toys.

Within the culture there were many differences between boys and girls in their preferences. Finnish boys liked much more strongly masculine toys than Finnish girls. Finnish girls liked female-typed toys only a little bit more than Finnish boys liked.

In Estonian data, there were big differences between boys' and girls' preferences: boys liked much more male-typed toys than girls, and girls liked much more female-typed toys than boys.

Neutral toys were liked by children so that there were no differences between cultures neither between the sexes (Table 4).

Table 4.

Neutral toy preferences of Estonian and Finnish children

	Estonian		**Finnish**		
	Boys 28		Boys 30		
	Girls 30		Girls 30		
	M	**SD**	**M**	**SD**	
Boys	12.0	2.1	12.4	3.4	p=0.4966 n.s.
Girls	12.1	2.0	13.0	3.4	p=0.2014 n.s.
	p=0.7972 n.s.		p=0.5233 n.s.		

DISCUSSION

The main result was that there was a clear difference between the sexes, boys preferring more male-typed toys than girls, and girls preferring more female-typed toys than boys. The result was the same in both countries.

Smetana, Letourneau (1984) found that Caucasian preschool boys were more sex-stereotyped even when interacting with opposite-sex peers than girls were. The

interpretation could be that males have been found to receive greater negative sanctions for engaging in sex-inappropriate behavior than have females. Also Levy (1994) found that boys' accurate classifications of same-sex masculine toys were greater than girls' classifications of same-sex feminine toys.

Between the cultures there were only some light differences: Finnish girls preferred more male-typed toys than Estonian girls, and Finnish boys liked more aggressive toys than Estonian boys. We must study in the future in more details what kind of play materials children have in Estonia and in Finland, because children's toy choices are influenced also by the availability of toys and play materials (Gottfried, Brown 1986).

Both Estonian and Finnish boys were clearly masculine in their toy preferences, but the masculinity means something different in Estonia and Finland: only Finnish boys told liking soldiers and guns. Perhaps the war time is so near in Estonia that the guns and soldiers are really frightening for Estonian children. This result also shows to us that gender typing is not a coherent, unidimensional phenomenon, which is clearly proved by Turner's and Gervai's (1995) research.

In this present data the bigger differences were found between the sexes than between cultures. When comparating British and Hungarian children with the same method as we used, the main result was that the difference between the cultures was much greater than the male-female difference within cultures (Turner, Gervai 1995). Perhaps Finnish and Estonian cultures in their gender-typed attitudes are more similar with each other than British and Hungarian cultures are.

According to the results of the present study both Estonian and Finnish children preferred their own sex-typed toys. Also Caucasian preschool children liked even very attractive toys less if they were labeled as being for the other sex, and especially when they expected other children to do the same (Martin, Eisenbud, Rose 1995). According to Levy (1994) white preschool children demonstrated more accurate classification of same-sex than other-sex gender-typed toys.

One consequence of children selecting own-sex-stereotyped toys is that it limits their experiences. Different types of toys encourage distinctly different types of play and learning (Martin, Eisenbud, Rose 1995). Labelling toys as being for girls or boys influences children's behavior in a number of ways. Firstly, children tend to explore same-sex-labelled toys more than other-sex-labelled toys. Secondly, labels also influence children's performance on games. When a game is labelled as being for their own sex, children perform better than when a game is labelled for both sexes, and much better when it is labelled as being for the other sex. Thirdly, recall of information is also influenced by gender labels. Children remember better the names of objects labelled as being for their own sex than the names of objects labelled as being for the other sex. (Martin, Eisenbud, Rose 1995) When girls and boys play with different types of toys these different experiences will teach children a particular set

of gender-appropriate behaviors and also will contribute to the devlopment of differential cognitive and social skills and problem-solving strategies (Miller 1987).

According to Coats and Overman (1992) gender-specific toys may socialize children into stereotypic choices by providing them with opportunities to experiment and rehearse future roles and occupations. Stereotypic toys also provide cues to social limitations and may constrain the experiences of each gender.While boys practise group skills, girls are left out of activities which would allow them to compete later with males in the broader society. Gender-specific differentiation in childhood experiences may limit occupational choices and job success.

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LASTE MÄNGUASJADE EELISTUSED EESTIS JA SOOMES

Resümee

Arengut käsitlev kirjandus on järjekindlalt kinnitanud, et lapsed eelistavad oma soo stereotüübile vastavaid mänguasju vastassoo stereotüübile vastavate ees. Koolieelsed aastad on eriti olulised sooidentiteedi ja soole omaste kontseptsioonide kujunemisel nii sookäitumises, soole iseloomulikes tegevustes, mänguasjades kui mujal. Antud uurimuse eesmärgiks oli võrrelda poiste ja tüdrukute mänguasjaeelistusi ning kõrvutada eesti ja soome laste mänguasjaeelistusi.

Mänguasjaeelistusi hinnati Spence ja Helmreichi (1978) poolt välja töötatud metoodika alusel. Lastele näidati ükshaaval kindlaksmääratud järjekorras mustvalgeid joonistusi tüüpilistest mehelikest ja naiselikest ning neutraalsetest mänguasjadest ning paluti kirjeldada, kuidas need mänguasjad neile meeldivad. Uurimuses osales 60 soome last (30 poissi ja 30 tüdrukut) ja 58 eesti last (28 poissi ja 30 tüdrukut), vanuses 4–7 aastat.

Eesti laste puhul olid erinevused poiste ja tüdrukute mänguasjaeelistustes suuremad kui soome laste puhul. Eesti laste, nii poiste kui ka tüdrukute, mänguasjaeelistused olid traditsioonilisemad kui soome laste omad.

VI THE HISTORY AND FUTURE OF PLAY IN SOCIETY

Acta Universitatis Scientiarum Socialium et Artis Educandi Tallinnensis. 1998. A12: 145-152

Joseph J. Dambrauskas

VICTIMIZATION ON THE WAY TO HERO-MAKING IN THE PLAY OF 7-8-YEAR OLD AMERICAN BOYS

Annotation

The transformation of the play of three 7-8-year-old American boys will be presented as a demonstration of a group process of victimization apparently existing at that age in American boys. The play episode analysed involved the splitting of a previously coherent and peaceful group into sides composed of an 'in' group and an 'out' group, with the interesting twist that the original outsider successfully braved the storm and, turning into the 'hero', led the group then against one of its own members, who is then victimized and successfully extruded from the group. A final comment on the relevance of this process to early schoolage children and even to social and historical events in the adult world sums up the analysis.

The following play is from an observation of three Caucasian American boys about 7-8 years of age in the city of Madison, Wiconsin in America on 11 May 1992. It is being presented here as a noteworthy illustration of play proceeding along a line of development such that, in retrospect, an adult observer such as myself can distinguish what appears to be a sequence of steps, each related to the preceding and developing it in a new and deeper way. The method of deducing this is simple - an objective recording of the facts and then a simple laying bare of the nature of these obvious connections.

Here the play will begin in relative peace and tranquility, then end in bombastic discord, with the disruption of the previously intact and unified group into an 'in' group and an 'out' group, the split occurring by means of a sort of 'hazing' process, the survivor of which (if he can make himself survive it) becomes the brave hero and surprisingly turns the group (small as it is) against another member who then leaves the group and becomes an outsider.

The utility of such an exposition here is two-fold. First it is believed simple sequencing as occurs here is common in children's play and allows a means of understanding much of it. Secondly, the specific type of play here, which is labelled as 'exploding-hero-making' play, produces a sequence often enough seen in the adult world around us, evidence that the mental processes of childhood remain active and powerful forces throughout life, the understanding of which as a childhood process may embarass adults enough to resist playing into such ploys, whether they be the hero, the victim

or the sheep siding with the hero warrior as their leader - though in real life the brain probably does not work like that and these forces are so deep as to not be easily counteracted consciously. But at least we can understand in hindsight where such tendencies come from.

The play episode which follows is given almost exactly as it was transcribed from memory, by habit, a few short hours after it was observed, and which includes the initial impressions and hypotheses on the meaning of the play which arose from it.

Table 1.

Play episode

DIRT BOMBS	11 May 1992
	Marlborough Park at Whenona Road
	Madison, Wisconsin
3 boys (c. 7-8 years old)	3 p.m. / 20 min. / exactly 45 paces away
-blond on bike	
-brown hair, red shirt, chubby	
-brown hair, turquoise jersey, chubby	

I was in the neat park not eight blocks from my home which I had discovered only yesterday, collecting dandelions for wine which Kevin and I will make. On my way back I passed these kids who had been playing in the environs of a grove of aspen trees bordering the grassy area for about 30 minutes before I came by. I at first passed by, then returned and sat at the little rotunda shelter nearby atop the hill, even though I knew there were two restrooms there and it might look suspicious to these closed-off, suspicious Wisconsinites.

Well, fortunately the kids did not notice me and no one called to alarm them and no one even walked by, so I had them all to myself, undisturbed, without much paranoia because I had been walking around an hour and a half collecting flowers in the open, so everyone in nearby homes knew what I was about. The three were all seated on the ground (which was flat and packed and fairly sandy atop this knoll which doubtless gives the Marlborough Heights region where I live its name). This was really in a fairly wide path (going nowhere) etched out of an unmowed and uncultivated piece of land around the grove which the kids obviously used to ride around in on their bikes. (The entire park is singularly beautiful, really, I have to say - terraced into two or three levels at one point, with an irregular, paved path and with several mowed, connecting paths through the taller growth of short prarie grass. And the grove of aspen was too beautiful for words and kids love congregating deep in its bowels, apparently, so I was lucky that these three decided to play a bit out in the open.)

All three were seated, as I said, in a circle, facing each other and talking in calm, low voices. Everything was peaceful. Their bikes lay to the outside of their circle around them. They looked to be building up the dirt into mounds or something (but there was no trace of any such thing when I went over to inspect the area later after they had left.) Everything was cozy for about the first eight to nine minutes I was around. There was an ebb and flow of moderate pitch but with low press and low volume and frequent end escalations. No arguing nor strident vying was at all evident.

Then the blond rose and stood up. First he said a few words no different than before, then threw a very small bit of the dust-sand into the air above the other two after announcing it so that everyone was prepared. (I was struck at this because it reminded me of 'dirt bombs' that I myself, as a child, had thrown at passing cars on Third Street in Clairton.) No one complained - even the boy in blue on the left which most of the dirt seemed to land on! He merely shook himself where he sat.

Before long this built up though. There was another 'bomb' of dust-dirt-sand thrown in their midst, and this time both sitting ones got it, but again, they did not seem to mind it. Shortly there were all sorts of 'explosions' in the air as all three (now seated together) would yell out in unison, "Explosion," and throw huge handsful of dirt-dust-sand into the air above them, so that they drenched themselves with it.

Then the blond took to his bike and went down the path to the right a bit, returning and enjoying riding over a hump or two that had been built into the dirt path. When he came by (and apparently through their midst), he would get a handful of dust thrown at him even though it would land on one of the other of the pair as well (or even come back onto the one who had thrown it!). They all liked this and no one minded a bit-they just shook off the dust and for some unknown reason even remarked with a tone of congratulations to the blond when he cruised through, "Yea, he made it!". And once the chubby boy in red yelled out something (?"Explosion"?) just before firing at the blond rider.

But then gradually things changed.

First I noticed the chub in red was sobbing and complained where he sat, his back turned toward the other two (and I could guess why). About three minutes later a second incident occurred when the chub in blue apparently threw sand at the chub in red. What caused all the consternation now? Well, as the boy in red himself explained, sobbing, "...my eyes were open." So the play had subtly changed to frank aggression as far as the timing went, and someone got it when they were not prepared, and the injury (heretofore accepted without complaint) now became a sore point. The boy in red a minute later, while standing, threw a handful of dust back at his attacker and bid them good riddance and rode off on his bicycle.

Within seconds the other two were moving off in the same direction - home, no doubt.

IMPRESSION: There you have it. No sooner do I marvel at the peace of the play and the sense of fraternity than sides are taken and aggression occurs. The process seemed to be as follows:

1. Blond leaves the circle and throws dirt back into the circle.

2. Two boys make a game of it, initiating the play and creating a game of "explosions."

3. Omen or not, the 'explosions' lead to more direct attacks, with increasing force on each other - the two seated ones against the rider (and vice versa). At this point still no one minded. It was still playful.

4. Then the blond rider, while standing, attacks one of the other two when they are not expecting it, and the other is injured. A kind of playfulness is lost.

5. The remaining, seated boy copies/imitates/sides with him in this new aggressive mood and attacks the same boy with him shortly afterwards when he is not expecting it. (That is, the third party sided with the aggressor and joined him by imitation in attacking the victim. And it seems appropriate now, with the change in tone and the appearance of hurtful intention, to refer to the recipient of the attack as a victim.)

6. This new target of the bomb explosions, now in the role of a victim, gets mad and retaliates with full force (and so might look bad and appear to be the real culprit to an outsider passing by or who turns to look at what the new fury is going on about.

7. The victim leaves and others follow suite as play breaks up and is ruined.

ADDENDUM: This is not scapegoating play per se - it was primarily and initially internal in quality...and perhaps in nature. But it becomes/ends up as external (i.e., disaffiliative) and scapegoating. How? Several hypotheses can be conjectured.

HYPOTHESIS 1: This may be the natural end/goal/aim of the play progression - the extrusion of a member within the group and the erection of the 'hero' and of a new sense of 'activeness' around some contrived issue in the face of an otherwise passive experience of being a closed and static and harmonious group.

The game/play ends with the extrusion/expulsion of a victim and the erection of an active hero. The departure of the victim here in this play can be seen as secondary to the primary event of a reversal in who will take on the role of victim and a reversal in the original victim's role to that of a hero/leader. That the group dissolved, then, is not ot the essence.

Note that in regard to this kind of analysis it is crucial to recall that for the longest time preceding this buildup and eventuality, the group was

~ in a circle

~ tight and closely knit

~ playing and working harmoniously

~ for a long time - at least 25 minutes - engaged initially in this one kind of play and in that one spot and configuration,as noted.

HYPOTHESIS 2: The play may be looked at at two different levels as well, each perhaps equally valid. One level is the literal one wherein there are just three members and the original 'victim' becomes the eventual hero after braving the storm and taking over the group, with the result that one of the preceding inner circle members becomes the new victim and is extruded/sacrificed by the group.

The second level of perception is more metapsychological. It may be construed from the play that the group is acting out the above dynamics but in a more global and general way as well, such that more than three roles are being acted out by these three boys. That is, the one braving the storm may not actually come from the group itself though the role is played out by one of the three boys within the circle because someone in the group would have to play out the role of a true outsider, one who would in actuality be outside the group. Such would be the case if the three were acting out a post-traumatic incident of someone coming in and taking over something in their lives, such as their home, group, city or country and so being victimized themselves. While one can make a possible argument that the three Caucasian boys were acting out their experience of being victimized by some other group, for example, such as the minority black population in America who themselves used to be victimized by the white majority population and now are increasingly idolized by the general population as they never were before, there is little if any evidence for this in the play material, and is further mitigated against by both the original unitary state of the play and its harmonious nature being a non-compatible theme, as well as by parsimony. Parsimony would suggest that the transformation from victim to hero may be explained in a simpler way, as a general cultural theme common to all Americans and characteristic of the culture itself. And indeed the issue of overcoming adversity and injustice and victimization of all sorts is one of the more consciously explicit and continuously stated tenets of the American Constitution which serves as the touchstone of American civilization - that anyone being mistreated shall have the means for undoing such a state (Reich 1987). And it is surely the principle theme of American business, another touchstone of the culture - that the will to overcome and win and oust those who would oust and better you is what most persons in commercial business in America strive for and build their success on (Reich 1987).

HYPOTHESIS 3: Consistent with the American cultural theme of the will to win and/or to overcome adversity and the odds against one is the earliest transformation evident in the play, that from a harmonious and relatively passive state energetically into a more active state. And such 'activeness' certainly has been a hallmark of American culture as noted from the time of the earliest observers in colonial times (Adams 1933).

HYPOTHESIS 4: This sort of group phenomenon with a martial solution to the phenomenon of stasis and tranquility in a closed circle is also consistent with a common astrological calculation of America's horoscope as being a resting state with moon in Cancer and a reactive state of the moon being in Aries (though one would think this sort of play is hardly specific to America).

SUMMARY

1. A play episode was parsed out into a succession of steps which entail a component of exploding play followed by a sequence of braving play which all flows from an originating resting state of tranquility. Such a bipartite composition is postulated here to perhaps characterize play of all sorts in general, not just this example.

   That remains to be determined, however.

   The function of such a bipartite make-up is not clear at this time (though here a transition between internal states of affiliation and external states of dis-affiliation, seems to characterize each of the two components, the 'head' and the 'tail' parts, so to speak).

2. The active exploding-braving play arose out of a relatively passive state of harmonious stasis energetically. What triggered such a transformation is unknown.

3. As a part of this transformation the original target of the initial attacks in the more or less still, playful state turned the tables on the other members and made one of them the new victim, now in an intensified and dis-affiliative mode of play which made the former victim now the hero/boss and made the new victim leave the group in rancor.

   (It ought to be explained as well here that the term 'hero' is used simply because the first victim braved the hazing given him and came out triumphant and the second victim, by contrast, could not.) The second boy in the victim's role could not stomach the hazing given him and was scapegoated (but it must be remembered this second victim was subjected to a heightened level of antagonism which was clearly no longer playful in the ordinary sense of the word, as this boy's decision to leave demonstrated). When this process was over, the 'play' ended and the remaining players disbanded, suggesting that this was the natural climax and denouement of this particular play process.

4. This children's play seems to have a counterpart in the adult world of American culture in legal, social and commercial dimensions, at the least.

   Whether this correspondence denotes that the adult world takes shape from the mind state seen here in youngsters, or whether the youngsters are modelling the adult world remains to be understood.

In this regard it should be noted, though, that in approximately seventy play episodes observed and recorded during an extended study on children's play in both Madison, Wisconsin and nearby Rockford, Illinois during the years 1992-1995, this was the only one to show this particular sequence of events, which is remarkable, given the pervasiveness of this theme in adult American society historically. Conversely, during this time period there were several other themes discovered to be more common in children's play in this locale of the country and which took several forms, suggesting they were more typical and consistent and integral themes in children's play in this area, themes such as co-optation, entanglement and conformity.

5. Overall this exposition shows how play characteristic of a culture can be observed in a sample of children's play (the sample given here being of relatively low frequency but given nonetheless because of its simplicity, its illustrative value, and its correspondence to long-standing and well-known historical characteristics of the American culture).

6. In adult life when such a sequence is enacted in commerce or politics, what is most conscious in the minds of the people involved, just as with the children involved in their play, is no doubt an awe of the victor who prevails over the others and the apparently justifiable basis that exists for someone else being victimized (in the children's case, the final victim appearing to be a sissy in the face of the actions of the newly evolving hero).

   Yet a parsing and careful description of the children's version here would suggest that a transition had been made as well involving the loss of an affiliative realm of existence where attacks were more or less playful and painless and the appearance of a moderately dis-affiliative realm of existence which is now taken to be more 'real' and less playful, where pain is felt as pain and intentionally given as such.

7. A minor but salient point as well is the transition of the turncoat who rejected his original mate and turned to side with the frankly aggressive boy (aggressive because the explosions were now designed to be hurtful due to a lack of warning, et cetera).

   This suggests a component of identification with the aggressor lurks as a powerful and unconscious motivator for the bulk of the adult American population living in the keenly competitive world of American society, preferring to somewhat sheepishly straddle the line and side expediently with whoever the current winner and hero of the day may be - that is, to the extent that such children's play as shown here does characterize part of the American culture of today. And the nature of the American presidential elections seems to suggest it is a ritualization of this entire process being acted out, with the bulk of the population siding according to whom the apparent hero seems to be, their opinions invariably changing as the ritual process fades and a clearer and less socially influenced mind surfaces.

QUESTION: Will the conscious awareness of such latent, unconscious processes probably being a part of modern American culture make citizens more wise and give up such ways of existence? One wonders, because unconscious forces are so deep, so emotional, so powerful and so unseeable that even conscious cognition is often easily swept away in their wake when they do arise.

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OHVRITE TOOMINE AMEERIKA 7- 8-AASTASTE POISTE KANGELASTE KUJUNDAMISEL

Resümee

Latentne alateadlik mängu protsess käib sageli koos hoopis erineva ja teadlikult silmanähtava tasandi mänguga. Silmanähtav tasand võib tõepoolest olla erinevat tüüpi alateadlike/latentsete jõudude väljendusvahendiks, mis muudavad mängu suvalistes suundades. Nii toimunud muutused omakorda sõltuvad paljudest erinevatest tingimustest, nagu vanus, sugu, intelligentsus, sotsiaalmajanduslik tase, kontekst, trauma ja ontogenees ning muud.

Muutused 7-8-aastaste ameerika poiste mängudes esitatakse ohverdamise grupiprotsessi märkimisväärse demonstratsioonina, mis ilmselt selles eas ameerika poiste hulgas toimib. Mängu episood, mis kestab nelikümmend viis minutit, esitatakse sisutihedas vormis, millele järgneb mängu jagamine olulisteks elementideks, millega kaasneb eelnevalt koherentse ja rahuliku grupi jagamine kaheks erinevaks pooleks, millest osa liikmeid kuuluvad gruppi ja osa on grupist väljas. Huvitavaks pöördeks mängus on, et algselt grupist väljas olnu on tulemuslikult esile kutsunud asjade tormilise arengu ja muutunud *kangelaseks*, on suunanud grupi rünnaku edukalt ühe grupi liikme vastu, kes tuuakse ohvriks ja eemaldatakse grupist. Grupisisene vahetegemine ja muutused toimivad kiiresti, kaasa arvatud hüpotees, et see protsess võib teenida narriva *riituse* alusena, milles valitakse juhid ja grupi suundumus selle põhjal, kes suudab sellisele rünnakule vastu seista ja nii grupi enda ümber koondada. Järgneb lõplik kommentaar, mis lähtub protsessi relevantsusest varases koolieas lastele ja isegi täiskasvanute maailma sotsiaalsetele ja ajaloolistele sündmustele (kust need varase lapsepõlve kangelaste kujundamise ja ohvrite toomise vormid ikka veel sageli pärinevad).

Acta Universitatis Scientiarum Socialium et Artis Educandi Tallinnensis. 1998. A12: 153-159

Jarmo Kinos

PLAY, EDUCATION AND CULTURE – A PROBLEMATIC COMBINATION

Annotation

In my article I will examine the subject "Play, education and culture - a problematic combination" in a Finnish context. I will start by a historical examination of the Finnish sociocultural field in order to make understandable the essence of its subfield, the pedagogical field.

FINLAND – A CENTRALIZED, GOVERNMENT-LED, HOMOGENEOUS CULTURE

In Finland, quite a strict government-led and homogeneous culture still prevails. It goes back to the last century when the Czar of Russia granted Finland autonomy. However, Finland still was a part of Russia. In this historical situation, national identity and the budding hope of an independent state was supported by and built on having an own central government-functioning as an independent state was practiced.

After Finland had become independent in 1917 after the civil war, the significance of the intervention of the state and homogeneous culture were emphasized in a new way. The winning party had to make the social conditions stable and try to make the national culture homogeneous in order to secure the existence and independence of the young state.

After the Second World War, a homogenizing social model based on monopolies and strongly centralized leadership was again a historical necessity. Consensus thinking, with the ideas of closed economy, lutheran obedience and respect of the authorities was our vital condition in recovering from heavy wars and their inheritance. (Wuori 1995:52, 56-57.)

The modern Nordic welfare state, too, has been based on the central role of the state and its central offices in the organization of the everyday life of the citizens. Thus the reverse side of the welfare state is that the control policy of the public rule has helped to increase social homogeneity.(Wuori 1995:60-61.)

TRANSFER OF HOMOGENEOUS CULTURE TO MICRO STURCTURES

How is it to be explained that a government-led homogenising ideology is constantly transferred to education and the functioning of the educational institutions? Explanations can be looked for in the ideas of sociology of education.

Professional ideology is based on the idea that experts aim at securing their own interests through state support. By the contract between the state and the experts the state gives a certain expert group the monopoly of performing a certain social task. In return, the expert group undertakes to act in the interests of the historically formed state, that is, to reproduce the prevailing power hierarchy. At the same time, the expert group will be able to reproduce its own history, that is, the middle class culture they represent. The tool given to the experts (for example teachers) is the legitimate right to define, among other things, good manners, interests of the child and common good. (Rinne 1987:306; Kivinen 1994:173; Wuori 1995:36; Bourdieu, Wacquant 1995: 134, 144.)

After social closure the profession group will itself start to define the needs and foundations of its own existence. Children become the raw material that various professions regard as their own fuel. (Pulma 1992:61.)

Bourdieu's (1985:105-110; 1995:129-130) field theory offers further assistance to the analysis. According to the theory various agents, in this case the child and the adult struggle for the command of the kindergarten field. Both parties try to make their own definitions and points of view to be the prevalent practice according to which the kindergarten should operate. Trained experts aim at organizing the activity of the kindergarten, according to the legitimate task given to them, for example through a certain timetable in order to give the children's activity a formula that tells the children what to do and when and why to do it. In this way, the children's life of the present will be made compatible with history.

In addition, it is typical of the Finnish day care system that the social service character, the institutional point of view is emphasized. The conception that emphasizes taking care of children and their protection wish all the best for the children. However, the drawback of this kind of a child concept is that it stresses the role of the children as passive recipients instead of their role as active producers. It is the adults who are regarded as the active actors, not the children. The whole day care is thus thought of as being primarily an adult activity: the main functional disturbances are often, indeed, factors connected to the salaried work of the adults like contentment at work, poor esteem of the work, noise and contradictions about the division of work. (Keskinen 1990:198-201, 204; Strandell 1995:8, 13; Kinos 1995:155-157, 227-229.)

HOMOGENEOUS CULTURE REFLECTED IN EDUCATION

What has happened to childhood and to the children's very own activity - the play? From the social and historical point of view Finnish childhood has become institu-

tionalized. The rise of the kindergarten is part of this long process the consequence of which is that children are shut out from participating in the "real" society. Environments developed especially for their needs are assigned to them as indeed every expert group must try to prove their own competence and scientific ability by continuously inventing new ways to diagnose and define children's needs. (Pulma 1992:59, 61; Strandell 1995:7-8.)

The position of the teaching profession is guaranteed by a professional tradition made scientific, scientific work management (Kivinen 1994, 1973), that is, didactics. In didactic processes the teacher is seen as a superior expert (Lahdes 1977:300) in relation to the child. This entitles the teachers to plan and organize in the way they want the day and a great part of the life of the child. In the terms of sociology of education this means reproduction of the prevailing culture, the main stream of the culture. In classical Finnish didactic literature the term learning is neither analyzed nor mentioned (Rauste-von Wright, von Wright 1994:150).

The homogenizing culture is reflected in education as a "demand for general didactics". We have been entitled to the same kind of teaching in the same kind of kindergartens and schools, under the leadership of the same kind of teachers, according to the same kind of curricula and in the same pace. The tradition going back to the last century is alive and thriving.

The interaction between children and adults culminates in the didactic culture in the concepts of "play supervision" and "group control". The concepts of supervision and control are the few points of contact that exist between Finnish kindergarten personnel and children's activity. Through these concepts the adults relate themselves to the activities of the children. Various mechanisms of controlling other human beings emerge as the most important form of know-how of the professional staff. Discussion of social problems and use of power gets to be passed over in the discourse of science of education. (Kivinen, Rinne 1990:41; Strandell 1995:16.)

As a consequence of the institutionalization, play is not anymore seen as the true expression of the child's nature, but as its contrast. Modern play is a specialized activity, for which special toys and equipment as well as special play rooms are needed, and to which the so-called didactic play offers an interactive frame and rules of the game determined and accepted by the adults. (Strandell 1995:9, see e.g. Lasten päivähoito Neuvostoliitossa 1975:109, 118, 138-139, 164-165; Zalushska 1976:74-82; Lummelahti 1993.)

The habitus of man is a series of historically organized structures - thus for example school experiences are structurized through home and kindergarten experiences (Bourdieu, Wacquant 1995:165). This sociohistorical concept coincides also with the basic idea of developmental psychology and constructivistic concept of learning (Rauste-von Wright, von Wright 1994).

Now, the paradox concerning didactic play can be formulated:

As the experience acquired at home and kindergarten is imprinted in the child's habitus and influences all that comes later, so also didactic play will accumulate in the child's historical experience as a supervised and subservient existence and creates for the child a picture of itself as a dependent, authority controlled and manipulative being. This can lead to "I only followed my orders" ethics.

CHOICES IN THE POSTMODERN CULTURE- FREE BUT OBLIGATORY

Sociocultural viewpoints are always reflected in education. The relationship between culture and education may be a conservative one, in which case the goal of education is to reproduce the prevailing power relationships; to bring about subjection and ultimately, to conserve the status of the power élite. The relationship between culture and education may also be a reconstructive one aiming at democratisation of the political top structure of the society, which would gradually lead to a citizenship society with individuality and solidarity as "the highest values".

From the social and cultural point of view, education can thus be defined in terms of two mutually contrasting approraches. Viewed from the child's angle, adult originated education is based on intervention from external sources, such as parents, teachers, other authorities and experts. Hence, education appears to the child as something mysterious, something that the child is unable to influence. Child originated education is based on the child's own ideas and intentions - it is created and implemented by the children themselves. The role of the adult is that of an equal mate, a co-researcher or a tutor who accepts and appreciates the children's solutions and suggestions.

Play has been utilised in both adult and child originated education. On the one hand, play can be used as a mechanism of externally directed intervention - in the form of didactic play which converts the child's status from a subject into an object. On the ohter hand, play can be viewed as the child's most original and authentic activity in which the child's inner world and outer activity are integrated. Consequently, the child's individuality and the social reality are united.

The relationship between play and education is obviously a problematic one. The significance of play is explicitly determined by the practices of education and by the strategies that are applied in educational institutions. Play, as it is conventionally referred to in educational contexts, does not necessarily lead to sociocultural development. In order for this to happen it is of vital importance to integrate play into a wider educational doctrine.

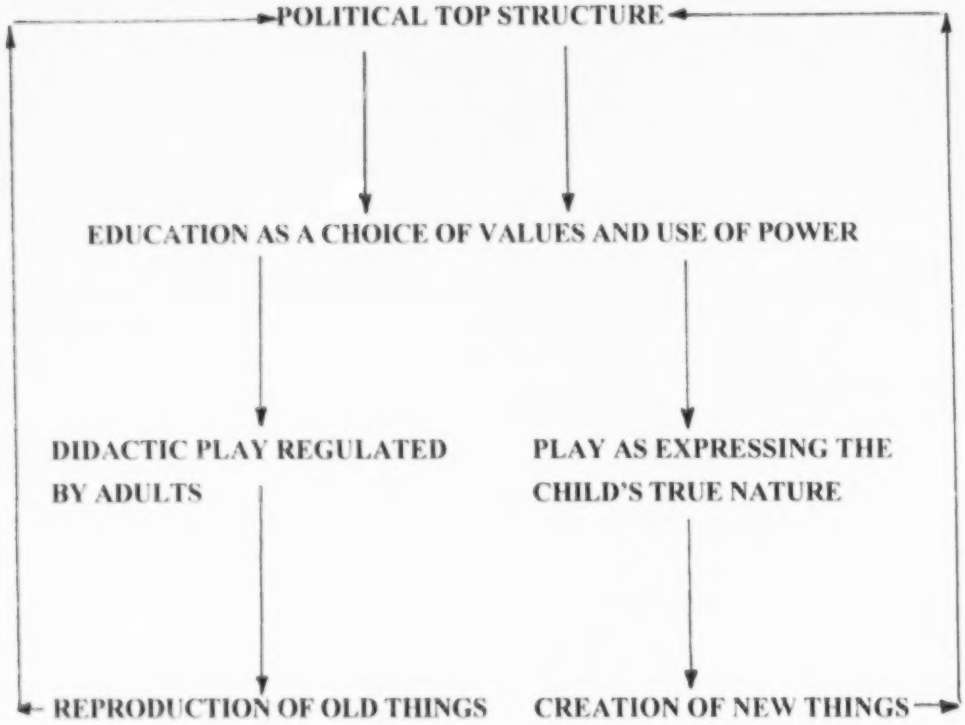
POLITICAL TOP STRUCTURE
EDUCATION AS A CHOICE OF VALUES AND USE OF POWER
DIDACTIC PLAY REGULATED BY ADULTS
PLAY AS EXPRESSING THE CHILD'S TRUE NATURE
REPRODUCTION OF OLD THINGS
CREATION OF NEW THINGS

Figure 1. The possible connection between play and political top structure.

It is central to see that education is a political activity; it is a question of the choice of values and use of power - either of developing social and cultural life or reproducing the old. In the postmodern society "the choice is free but obligatory".

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MÄNG, KASVATUS JA KULTUUR – PROBLEMAATILINE KOMBINATSIOON

Resümee

Sotsiaalkultuurilised põhimõtted peegelduvad alati kasvatuses. Ühest küljest võib suhe kasvatuse ja kultuuri vahel olla selline, kus kasvatuse eesmärgiks on reprodutseerida valitsevaid võimusuhteid, sisendada kuulekust ja seega konserveerida võimueliidi staatust. Teisest küljest võib suhe kasvatuse ja kultuuri vahel olla rekonstrueeriv, püüeldes ühiskonna tippstruktuuri demokratiseerimisele, mis pikapeale viib välja kodanike ühiskonnale, kus kõrgeimateks väärtusteks on individuaalsus ja solidaarsus.

Sotsiaalsest ja kultuurilisest seisukohast võib seega kasvatust defineerida kahe vastaka lähenemise kaudu. Lapse poolt vaadelduna põhineb täiskasvanutelt lähtuv kasvatus välisallikatest, nagu näiteks vanemad, õpetajad, teised autoriteedid ja eksperdid, tuleneval sekkumisel. Seetõttu näib kasvatus lapse jaoks millegi müstilisena, mida laps ei ole võimeline ise mõjutama. Lapsest lähtuv kasvatus põhineb lapse enese ideedele ja kavatsustele – selle loovad ja rakendavad lapsed ise. Täiskasvanu rolliks on olla võrdväärne kaaslane, kaasuurija või juhendaja, kes aktsepteerib lastepoolseid lahendusi ja ettepanekuid.

Mängu on kasutatud nii täiskasvanutest kui ka lastest lähtuvas kasvatuses. Ühest küljest võib mäng olla väljastpoolt tuleva interventsiooni mehhanismiks – didaktilise mängu näol, mis muudab lapse staatuse subjektist objektiks. Teisest küljest võib mängu vaadelda kui lapsele kõige omasemat ja autentsemat tegevust, milles integreeruvad lapse sisemaailm ja väline tegevus. Järelikult, ühendatakse lapse individuaalsus ja sotsiaalne reaalsus.

Suhe mängu ja kasvatuse vahel on ilmselgelt problemaatiline. Mängu olulisus on selgesõnaliselt määratletud kasvatusalases töös ja strateegiates, mida rakendatakse kasvatusasutustes. Mäng sellisel kujul, nagu teda traditsiooniliselt kasvatuslikus kontekstis käsitletakse, ei aita tingimata kaasa sotsiaalkultuurilisele arengule. Et see ikkagi toimuks, on eluliselt tähtis integreerida mängu laiemas kasvatusdoktriinis.

Acta Universitatis Scientiarum Socialium et Artis Educandi Tallinnensis. 1998. A12: 160-168

Hein Retter

THE FUTURE OF CHILDREN'S PLAY IN A CHANGING SOCIETY AND THE TASK OF EDUCATIONAL THEORY

Annotation

The change of cultural contexts in children's play is analysed in this study. Today play as a definite sense begins to disappear and to dissolve in a great variety of fussy phenomena, which make it difficult to determine the borderline between play and nonplay. A paradox is met in attempts to promote children's play. The more we wish to promote play, the more it becomes mere behavioral training and a false form of play. Educational theory has to preserve and develop potential creativity in play.

THE PARADOX IN TODAY'S PLAYING

At the end of the 20th century, the leading industrial countries in the Western world are in an intellectual state which one must call contradictory, possibly even paradox: the greatest possible chances of progress are confronted by the greatest possible risks of survival of humanity, produced by precisely this progress. The ideas of progression and of crisis of modern times are in a relationship of mutual crossing-over: the scientific and technical progress sets free new action potentials and contingencies for the improvements of the human state of life, which contain inestimable risks and consequences. Whereas progress brings an enlargement of well-being to certain people, it reduces the chances of living for others. When we start thinking about the future of children's play in well-off countries, it is not the question of playing, but the question of mere survival which is of primary importance for children of the third world.

The crisis of modern times forces us to a critical analysis of the social contradictions to which children nowadays are subjected, directly or indirectly, and on the other hand causes us to reflect about the standards to which we are to orientate ourselves, so that the chances of living for future generations of children can be maintained or even improved where necessary. In the industrial nations, childhood and being a child now possess a very contradictory status.

Playing of children can be regarded as a standard of the chances which children are given for self-realization. If society pays attention to the creation and maintenance of

possibilities of children's play, the conditions of socialization of these children can also be none too bad. But what about children living under conditions of every day violence and deprived circumstances? When extreme existential fear forces one to put all one's power into survival, in order to have enough to eat or a place to live, then apparently playing is placed behind these existential necessities. Such conditions of socialization may suppress play, but not eliminate. Investigation in this special field all over the world makes clear, that nevertheless children *can* play in most distressing circumstances of life. It seems that this kind of play, mostly pretend play or pun, has the function to master their insecure situation and to give them self-confidence (Schwartzmann 1995).

A child with a sheltered upbringing in a family in a rich industrial society with its corresponding standard of living is kept clear of such problems. Here, mostly children are given enough opportunities to play as a rule.

If a part of the normal situation in Western countries is that half or at least one third of all marriages are divorced, then this also includes loss of bindings and disturbed emotional relationships between children and adults, the permanent effects of which cannot be compensated by any excess of leisure-time activities.

For the last 40 years influential factors on children's play such as the drop in the birth-rate, urbanization of life, use of media, individualization of lifestyles etc., could be found everywhere in Western industrial countries until nowadays.

MEDIA AND THE COMMERCIALISED WORLDS OF GAMES AND PLAYING

Today, there is an obvious link between play and pedagogical goals: In many cases they cannot be realized because reality is different. And this reality is so manifolded in its possibilities, so contradictory in its effects, so pluralistic in its valuations that we have difficulties in analysing the appropriate way.

Similar to the danger in playing by the influence of mass media and commercialising its ecological harm is an impact from the outside, which is neither foreseeable in its real effect nor even removable. Polluted air, contaminated soil, oil-polluted beaches are interferences of global scale which bring forth 'systematic' negative effects, remain threatening and are a latent risk for the growing-up of children also in an affluent society.

THE PLAY: POST-WAR TIME AND NOWADAYS

The socialisation of children today is different to that after the Second World War. To understand the present situation a comparison with the post-war era may be helpful:

Table 1.

Socialisation of children

Post war time	Today
Several children played in one group – mostly outside in the streets	Playing alone or with only one partner is the rule – mostly indoors
A big amount of toys and play materials were self-made. There was no big variety as far as offers in toy shops were concerned. Thus the share of toys was not so big	Children have a lot of toys and games; the market offers are plentiful, self-made toys are rare
Other leisure activities were rare – compared with play activities; children often had to help at home	There is competition between play activities and the usage of media, TV, video, audio-cassettes, computer-games etc.
Free time was not planned, occurred according to situation and actual needs	Free time is more organized at short/long-term planning (e.g. dates with friends, regular appointments: sports clubs, music school, groups of children in church etc.)
Play was mostly organized spontaneously by the children themselves	Offers to play are mostly granted by institutions such as kindergarten, communal groups, sports clubs
Play-grounds outdoors were near the living areas, everywhere where playing was possible – despite traffic and other limitations; a piece of nature was also at hand in the neighbourhood	Playing outdoors is often far away from the living areas; mostly there are special play-grounds (adventure parks, chess corner for the youths and the rockinghorse for the infant in the pedestrian zone), "nature" can only be reached by car
Playing indoors was possible either in one's own flat or at the neighbours' homes	Indoor playing either in one's own flat or further away with a family with a similar life style, apart from this: supermarkets and department stores with their multi media play become play-grounds for children, too
Spare time of children was mainly reduced to everyday life and hobbies; children were modest in their demands according to post-war conditions	Children as well as adults find adventure worlds through the commercialisation of spare time activities; the susceptibility to stimuli is much bigger than in earlier times; children's expectations towards life have also become greater

NEW APPROACHES TOWARDS PLAY AND THE CHALLENGES OF THE PRESENT TIME – ENDANGERING OF CHILDREN'S PLAY?

In 1995 a book was published as a teamwork of several play theorists to honour the international well-known play researcher Brian Sutton-Smith. The significant title of the volume is: *The Future of Play Theory* (Pellegrini 1995). Several views of play were used by the authors: Play as progress, play as power, play as fantasy, play as self. Naturally the question remains: What does the future of play and play theory look like?

The classical approaches to explain children's play - by psychoanalysis, anthropological studies, developmental psychology, phenomenology etc. - are completed today by other theories, in particular theories of communication, decision, action and ecology. The more the complexity of world grows, the more the theoretical effort grows to grasp the phenomenon of play. The result is paradox: Until now play has been a well-known activity, recognizable by well-distinct shapes (classified for instance in play with objects, fantasy play and game play), but at present everything seems to indicate that play in this definite sense begins to disappear and to dissolve in a great variety of fuzzy phenomena which often make it difficult to determine the border between *play* and *nonplay*.

This is a typical effect of *postmodern* relations. The main question of postmodern time is, which reality we should prefer, the *virtual* reality with its immense potentialities of online-communication - this makes "play" possible in a new sense - or the traditional face-to-face communication: *both* is starting to create mixed worlds in our every-day life (Bohn, Fuder 1994).

In the state of the industrial society changing to a post-industrial society also a *social* change becomes visible: Modern Western societies no longer have relatively uniform attitudes to values, social classes and forms of life, but are split up in themselves into a multitude of individual lifestyles with diverging socio-cultural contexts. This development has led not only to a change in the conditions of socialization of children and their playing activities, but also our estimation of the possible dangers which threaten children's play has become more differentiated: We include in our considerations

– that it is not possible to add up individual endangering factors to a sum total, but that they must be combined in a complex, multi-causal network of relationships to one another;

– that for this reason it would be unreasonable to wish to remove the endangering of children's play through individual counter-measures, but that rather a system-theoretical attempt at analyzing the situation of children at play appears to be necessary;

– that the "endangering of play" does not only result from a large number of restrictive ecological conditions and risk factors, but that it can also result from the unintentional side-effects of our own pedagogical intentions.

Until a short time ago, the endangering of children's play by a lack of natural possibilities of playing and the handing over of children to media consumption was regarded as the main danger, but nowadays, we must admit that any attempt to counteract such dangers through creating new possibilities of playing itself brings problems for children's play.

I should like to make this point clear with the example of the world-wide increase in institutionalization of children's play in the pre-school age group. The development of professionalization and expertization of play is a result of the increasing importance which we attach to play regarding the development of a child. We see the paradox: professionalization and expertization of the children automatically lead to an alienation from the thought of free, self-determined play. When children play together, away from the control of adults, they are among themselves, neither parents nor teachers are concerned with them. They form their own society, which also has a "private" character - this also means that the play group can form and also dissolve again spontaneously. But these natural play communities in the streets of residential areas have become rare in a time in which there is only a very thin network of individual neighbourhood relationships between children due to a lack of children.

A kindergarten, an institution with the professional task of promoting play amongst children, is on the other hand a public institution - in this point, comparable with a school or a department store: wherever the "public" element is predominant, individuals are subjected to certain rules of behaviour, are observed and controlled by others, always more indirectly than directly. Everyday life in a kindergarten is also determined by a high degree of social control by the teacher and the other children. This becomes especially obvious when a group of children plays a game together under the guidance of a teacher. Even if the children have fun doing it, which is the case as a rule, all the parties involved make sure that everybody abides by the rules. Individual behaviour is controlled by knowing that the others are watching.

The more I wish to put certain educational objectives into practice through play, e.g. improvement of social behaviour, the more I, as an educator, am forced to check whether the conditions exist for achieving these objectives; if necessary, I must intervene. Again, our pedagogical efforts reach a boundary in this paradox, which Paul Watzlawick described as a "be spontaneous" paradox. The more we wish to promote play of children according to plans and control, the more it becomes a mere behavioural training and thus a false form of play.

In consequence, the promotion of children's play is again a principle which appears paradoxical in itself:

As educationalists, we must not want to control everything, how a child plays, what it plays with. We must rather firstly take the risk that a child will transfer our offers of play into his own play reality in a different way from the one we wish, secondly give each child enough possibilities for "private play" by consciously not controlling the child. This paradox can only be solved if we develop positions of balance, i.e.

develop enough sensitiveness for situations in which we can leave children to their own devices and for other situations in which we play with them or are near them and observe their play.

In this context, indirect forms of pedagogical influence are becoming important. They have their effect not through direct interaction, but through the arrangement of the space available and a suitable selection of offers of play - a principle which is put into practice most consistently in the theories of Maria Montessori.

CHILDREN'S PLAY AND MULTI-CULTURAL EDUCATION

In Europe, we are confronted with the situation that in many countries indigenous children live side by side with children of completely different cultures from different countries of origin, whose families have been living in this country as migrants for a number of generations. We only need to consider the flow of asylum seekers to Germany, ethnic groups from the North African area in France or immigrants from Commonwealth countries in Great Britain. The liberalness within the European Union, which gives rise to the assumption of a large migration of work-seekers within Europe, reinforces this trend towards a multi-cultural society.

Thus, mutual esteem and tolerance towards the other culture with simultaneous strengthening of identity with one's own culture become an important educational objective. This too can only be put into practice in a well-balanced relationship.

In an attempt at peaceful co-existence of various ethnic groups of various cultural traditions, a more or less large residue of prejudices and conflict potential will always remain, even if understanding for one another gradually grows. The question is obvious: could playing together of children of various cultural origins not take on a pioneering role for a multi-cultural education on the basis of understanding and tolerance?

But we must not expect anything utopian of play. Children of various ethnic groups nowadays live very close to one another, yet strictly separated from one another, and are very rarely in a position to overcome the existing social and ethnic barriers. The Baltic States, especially Estonia and Latvia with a high percentage of Russian minority, are a striking example.

We must consider that, for children to play with one another, certain preconditions are necessary, and we must observe the peculiarities of attitudes to play of members of other cultures. In Germany many Muslim children are taught in kindergarten and school with German children. But there are other educational and game traditions in the Islamic culture, compared with the traditional European, Christian culture, mainly aimed at sex-specific separation. Attempts at sex-specific integration through playing together in the kindergarten are not without a risk of conflict, especially when the differing social contexts of the domestic milieu from which children come are not considered. Play will not simply overcome existing conflicts if these conflicts re-

main with constant severity in the social contexts in which children live. Play can place an accent in the framework of overcoming conflicts, but further measures and certain preconditions are necessary for young people who are basically strangers to find their way to one another. A game played in good pedagogical intention could even increase the existing conflicts between children of varying cultures if one has no feeling for its possibilities and restrictions.

In order to be able to play, children need emotional certainty and an atmosphere in which they feel at ease. Children should especially have enough opportunities

- to gain confidence in the situative environment into which they are placed,
- to gain confidence in the other children with whom they come together,
- to develop confidence in the adults looking after them.

It is only when the preconditions are fulfilled that play can be successful. It would be wrong to regard play as a therapeutic wonder weapon which can be used wherever the social climate is not in order. Play may well be able to overcome communication barriers then, but it needs the good will of all parties involved. Play does not develop its social function in a few pedagogical actions, but has a long-term effect in the course of many repetitions and alterations.

Playing is one of the positive expressions in the life of children. Characteristics of children are the showing of spontaneous behaviour, being inquisitive, dealing creatively with their environment. Being able to promote these abilities in children in an adequate way will depend on the extent to which society is now prepared to ensure continuation and development of children's play for further generations. The consciousness that everything which is done or omitted with regard to maintaining the environment will have effects on future generations, gives us a responsibility for the growth of future generations of children which we cannot simply ignore. Thus, the consequences of politics which permit developments damaging to the environment will only be seen by future generations and will then be irreversible with regard to the extent of the harmful effects.

Although children can develop creativity and skill through computers and monitor games of all kinds, the important thing now and in the future would be to maintain natural environments for children which make games possible not only with a joystick, but also through using the whole body and mind.

CONCLUSION

(1) Play depends on certain general conditions (i.e. personnel, sprace and material) which have to be catered for by educational theory even in times of fundamental social changes.

(2) Play as such is an ambivalent phenomenon: on the one hand, it contains elements which are pedagogically desirable, on the other hand, factors are involved which go

beyond these pedagogical requirements, become difficult to control and are not always pedagogically acceptable (e.g. aggression, exercise of power, addiction to games).

(3) Children's play is universal, although its various forms differ widely in different societies and subcultures.

(4) Play is always characterized by contrasting elements which stand in a dialectic relationship, and an educational theory of play will emphasize those elements which help to meet present and future requirements:

- promotion of universal, inter-cultural solidarity
- promotion of mixed-age forms of social contacts
- promotion of self-fulfilment, creativity and joy of living

(5) The future of children's play will depend on how much society is interested in encouraging it and keeping it alive. Play is a universal factor of culture and has its own potential of creativity. Educational theory has to preserve and develop this potential.

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LASTE MÄNGU TULEVIK MUUTUVAS ÜHISKONNAS JA KASVATUSTEOORIA ÜLESANDED

Resümee

Artikkel keskendub järgmistele punktidele:

(1) Mäng sõltub kindlatest üldtingimustest (nt personal, ruum ja materjal), mida kasvatusteoorial tuleb tagada isegi põhjalike ühiskondlike muutuste perioodil.

(2) Mäng kui selline on ambivalentne nähtus: ühest küljest sisaldab ta elemente, mis on pedagoogiliselt soovitavad, teisest küljest kuuluvad sinna ka tegurid, mis pedagoogiliste nõuete piire ületavad, mille kontrolli all hoidmine muutub keeruliseks ja mis ei ole alati pedagoogiliselt vastuvõetavad (nt agressiivsus, jõu kasutamine, mängudest sõltuvusse sattumine).

(3) Laste mäng on universaalne, kuigi selle erinevad vormid varieeruvad ühiskonniti ja kultuuriti.

(4) Mängu iseloomustavad vastanduvad elemendid, mis on omavahel dialektilises seoses, ning mängu kasvatusteoreetiline aspekt rõhutab elemente, mis aitavad täita alljärgnevaid nõudmisi:

- universaalse, kultuuridevahelise solidaarsuse propageerimine;
- erinevas eas laste ühiskondlike kontaktide soodustamine;
- eneseteostuse, loovuse ja elurõõmu edendamine.

(5) Laste mängu tulevik sõltub sellest, kuivõrd ühiskond on huvitatud selle soodustamisest ja säilitamisest. Mäng on kultuuri universaalne faktor ja kannab endas loovat potentsiaali. Kasvatusteooria ülesandeks on seda potentsiaali säilitada ja arendada.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

James F. Christie
Professor, Arisona State University, USA

Joseph J. Dambrauskas
PhD, Reseacher, Madison, Wisconsin, USA

Pertti Hakkarainen
PhD, Professor, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Maritta Hännikainen
PhD, Professor, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Peter E. Johnson
Phd, Professor, Kansas University, USA

Soili Keskinen
PhD, Professor, University of Turku, Finland

Jarmo Kinos
PhD, Senior Lecturer, University of Turku, Finland

Gunni Kärrby
PhD, Senior Reseacher, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

Anu Leppiman
M.A., Ass. Professor, Tallinn Pedagogical University, Estonia

Gunilla Lindqvist
PhD, Senior Reseacher, University of Karlstad, Sweden

Bert van Oers
PhD, Senior Lecturer, Free University Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Hein Retter
PhD, Professor, University of Braunschweig, Germany

Aino Saar
PhD, Ass. Professor, Tallinn Pedagogical University, Estonia

Lehte Tuuling
Postgraduate student, Tallinn Pedagogical University, Estonia

Aldona Vaichiene
PhD, Professor Šiauliai Pedagogical Institute, Lithuania

Marika Veisson
M.A., Ass Professor, Tallinn Pedagogical University, Estonia

Maie Vikat
PhD, Professor, Tallinn Pedagogical University, Estonia

AUTOREIST

James F. Christie
Arisona Ülikooli professor, USA

Joseph J. Dambrauskas
Madison, Visconsin, USA

Pertti Hakkarainen
Jyväskylä Ülikooli professor, Soome

Maritta Hännikainen
Jyväskylä Ülikooli professor, Soome

Peter, E. Johnson
Kansase Ülikooli professor, USA

Soili Keskinen
Turu Ülikooli professor, Soome

Jarmo Kinos
Turu Ülikooli vanemõpetaja, Soome

Gunni Kärrby
Göteborgi Ülikooli vanemteadur, Rootsi

Anu Leppiman
Tallinna Pedagoogikaülikooli dotsent, Eesti

Gunilla Lindqvist
Karlstadi Ülikooli vanemteadur, Rootsi

Bert van Oers
Amsterdami Vaba Ülikooli õppejõud, Holland

Hein Retter
Braunschweigi Ülikooli professor, Saksamaa

Aino Saar
Tallinna Pedagoogikaülikooli dotsent, Eesti

Lehte Tuuling
Tallinna Pedagoogikaülikooli magistrant, Eesti

Aldona Vaichiene
Šiauliai Pedagoogilise Instituudi professor, Leedu

Marika Veisson
Tallinna Pedagoogikaülikooli dotsent, Eesti

Maie Vikat
Tallilnna Pedagoogikaülikooli professor, Eesti